

The Adaptable Jesus of the Fourth Gospel

The Pedagogy of the Logos

Jason S. Sturdevant

SUPPLEMENTS TO NOVUM TESTAMENTUM 162

BRILL

The Adaptable Jesus of the Fourth Gospel

Supplements to Novum Testamentum

Executive Editors

M.M. Mitchell (*Chicago*)
D.P. Moessner (*Fort Worth*)

Editorial Board

H.W. Attridge (*New Haven*) – C. Breytenbach (*Berlin*)
C. Gerber (*Hamburg*) – J.K. Elliott (*Leeds*)
C.R. Holladay (*Atlanta*) – D. Marguerat (*Lausanne*)
M.J.J. Menken (*Tilburg*) – J.C. Thom (*Stellenbosch*)
P. Trebilco (*Dunedin*) – C.M. Tuckett (*Oxford*)

VOLUME 162

The titles published in this series are listed at *brill.com/nts*

The Adaptable Jesus of the Fourth Gospel

The Pedagogy of the Logos

By

Jason S. Sturdevant



BRILL

LEIDEN | BOSTON

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Sturdevant, Jason S.

The adaptable Jesus of the fourth gospel : the pedagogy of the logos / by Jason S. Sturdevant.

pages cm. — (Supplements to Novum Testamentum, ISSN 0167-9732 ; volume 162)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-90-04-30250-1 (hardback : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-90-04-30423-9 (e-book)

1. Bible. John—Criticism, interpretation, etc. 2. Jesus Christ—Teaching methods—Biblical teaching. I. Title.

BS2615.52.S785 2015

226.5'06—dc23

2015028928

This publication has been typeset in the multilingual “Brill” typeface. With over 5,100 characters covering Latin, IPA, Greek, and Cyrillic, this typeface is especially suitable for use in the humanities. For more information, please see www.brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 0167-9732

ISBN 978-90-04-30250-1 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-30423-9 (e-book)

Copyright 2015 by Koninklijke Brill nv, Leiden, The Netherlands.

Koninklijke Brill nv incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Hes & De Graaf, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Rodopi and Hotei Publishing.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by Koninklijke Brill nv provided that the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910, Danvers, MA 01923, USA. Fees are subject to change.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

For Jamie



Contents

Acknowledgements XI

Abbreviations XIII

Introduction: Adaptability and the Fourth Gospel 1

Who is the Johannine Jesus? 1

Adaptability: A Brief Overview 3

The Problem: The Paired Characters in the Gospel 6

Adaptability and John's Jesus 8

A Note on Method 10

1 Adaptability in the World of the Fourth Gospel: Presuppositions and Principles 13

Adaptability Defined 13

Presuppositions of Adaptability 18

The Character of the Adaptable Guide 18

The Aims of Adaptability 27

Practices of Adaptability 30

The Principle of Expedience 31

Initiating the Journey 32

Accommodating the Form of Communication 34

Variation 37

Progression 41

Summary 44

2 Descent and Adaptability: The Pedagogy of the Logos in Philo and the Fourth Gospel 47

Philo and John: Two Portraits of an Adaptable Logos 47

The Descent of the Logos: Philo 50

Philonic Terminology for Adaptability 51

Features of the Logos' Adaptability 53

The Pedagogical Techniques of Philo's Logos 59

Summary: The Pedagogy of the Philonic Logos 64

The Descent of the Son: The Fourth Gospel 65

Adaptability in John: Terminology and Presuppositions 66

Kinds of Adaptability in the Fourth Gospel 72

Pedagogical Methods of the Johannine Jesus 77

Windows into Johannine Adaptability 87

Looking Ahead 93

3 Adapting to Extremes: Variation and Progression in John (3–4)	94
Characters in Contrast	96
Assertion and Invitation: The Opening Exchanges	101
<i>"We Know that You Are a Teacher . . ." (3:1–3)</i>	101
<i>"Woman, Give Me a Drink" (4:4–9)</i>	107
Misunderstanding as a Doorway: Obscure Symbols	109
<i>The Problem of Perspective (3:4–8)</i>	110
<i>The Offer of Living Water (4:10–15)</i>	113
The Pivotal Statements: Incredulity and Dawning Recognition	117
<i>Stupor and the Spur (3:9–12)</i>	117
<i>Adapting the Approach (4:16–19)</i>	120
The Discourses: Jesus' Origins and True Worship	123
<i>The Nature of Jesus' Testimony and Mission (3:13–21)</i>	123
<i>Telling Her All Things (4:20–26)</i>	125
What Then? The Responses of the Dialogue Partners	129
<i>Nicodemus' Response (?)</i>	129
<i>The Samaritan's Invitation (4:29–30, 40–42)</i>	130
Conclusion	131
 4 With Words and Tears: The Sisters of Bethany in John 11:1–12:8	 133
The Raising of Lazarus: A Narrative in Baroque?	133
A Timely Delay (11:1–16)	136
"Do You Believe This?" (11:17–27)	138
"See How He Loved Him!" (11:28–37)	143
"For the Sake of the Crowd" (11:38–44)	147
Celebrating "The Resurrection" by Preparing for Death (12:1–8)	150
Conclusion	154
 5 Receiving the Resurrected Jesus: Mary Magdalene and Thomas (John 20)	 156
The Gardener's Work (20:1–2, 11–20)	157
<i>Lost at the Tomb</i>	157
<i>The Shepherd Speaks</i>	161
Passing Through Locked Doors (20:24–29)	164
<i>Thomas: Doubting or Misunderstanding?</i>	164
<i>An Appeal to Understand and Believe</i>	167
Conclusion: Witnessing and Interpreting the Resurrection	171

6 The Shepherd and the Witness: Jesus with Peter and the Beloved Disciple 172

Peter and the Beloved Disciple: Competing or Complementary? 173

Peter's Early Appearances: Passive and Active 176

The Naming of Simon Peter (1:41–42) 177

Excursus: The "Other Disciple" in 1:35–40 178

"You are the Holy One of God" (6:68–69) 180

Two Portraits of Peter 183

Misunderstanding, Mystery, and Misguided Promises: John 13 183

Misunderstanding: The Washing of the Disciples' Feet (13:1–18) 184

Mystery: The Betrayal Prediction (13:18–30) 186

Misguided Promises: Peter's Avowal of Love (13:31–38) 189

Peter's Double Betrayal: John 18 192

In the Garden (18:1–11) 193

In the Courtyard (18:18–27) 195

Observing and Witnessing: John 19–20 199

At the Cross: John 19 199

At the Empty Tomb: John 20 202

The Commission of the Shepherd and the Witness: John 21 204

Excursus: John 21 in Relation to the Gospel 204

The Commissioning of the Shepherd and the Witness 206

Summary and Conclusion 211

Conclusion 213

Bibliography 219

Index of Modern Authors 237

Index of Ancient Sources 240

Index of Subjects 250

Acknowledgements

This monograph is a revision of my Princeton Theological Seminary dissertation, and as such I must first express my heartfelt gratitude to my doctoral adviser, George L. Parsenios. His enthusiasm for the project and careful reading of my work have been of inestimable value, and it would not be what it is apart from his guidance. In the process of writing he provided whatever I seemed to need at any given time—whether boosting my morale, offering pointed criticism, or giving me freedom to find my own way. In short, he exemplified the very adaptability I explore in this study. I also appreciate greatly his concern for and influence upon my development as a scholar, aspects that will remain with me no doubt for the rest of my career. I am indebted as well to the other members of my Princeton Theological Seminary community, especially, C. Clifton Black, J. Ross Wagner, James Charlesworth, Beverly Gaventa, Shane Berg, Matthew Novenson, Brittany Wilson, Kara Lyons-Pardue, and Janette Ok, among many others. The several conversations with a wide range of faculty and students helped at various points to sharpen and improve the quality of this study.

I also thank my colleagues and students at North Carolina State University, where this project came to completion, in particular William Adler, Levi McLaughlin, Michael Pendlebury, Ann Rives, and Ken Peters for their support. I have equal gratitude to the participants of the Christianity in Antiquity colloquium at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where I was able to hone some important elements of the argument. My thanks further go to Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, who volunteered to read an early draft of this manuscript and provided me with some helpful advice on ways I could strengthen the overall argument.

I am very honored to have this study included in the Supplements to Novum Testamentum Series, and express my thanks to the series editors, Margaret M. Mitchell and David Moessner, for agreeing to publish my work. I have similar thanks to my anonymous reader, who provided helpful feedback and criticism to improve the quality of this monograph; and to both Mattie Kuiper, and Dinah Rapliza whose support in the final stages of the publication process was invaluable.

Lastly, I express to my family my heartfelt thanks and love. My parents and sister have offered so much, and words would fail to say how much I am indebted to them. Above all, I thank my wife, Jamie. I can hardly convey just

how grateful I am for all she has given me, in our home as well as in my studies. This monograph would not have come about without her careful editorial eye, her willingness to hear large portions of the argument at every step as they formed, and her frequent encouragement. I am thankful every day for her quick wit, her compassion, her thoughtfulness, and her fierce independence. I dedicate this project to her, my exemplar of both adaptable behavior and constancy of character.

Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992
<i>Abr.</i>	<i>De Abrahamo</i>
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
<i>Adul. Amic.</i>	<i>Quomodor adulator ab amico internoscatur</i>
<i>Agr.</i>	<i>De agricultura</i>
<i>Amic.</i>	<i>De amicitia</i>
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
<i>Anom.</i>	<i>Contra Anomoeos</i>
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> . Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase. Berlin, 1972–
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentary
ATANT	Abhandlung zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
AYBRL	Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library
BBR	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDAG	Bauer, W., F.W. Danker, W.F. Arndt, and F.W. Gingrich. <i>Greek- English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3d ed. Chicago, 2000
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
BibInt	Biblical Interpretation Series
BJS	Brown Judaic Studies
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BTB</i>	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
<i>Cels.</i>	<i>Contra Celsum</i>
<i>Cher.</i>	<i>De cherubim</i>
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
<i>Comm. Jo.</i>	<i>Commentary on John</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>De confusione linguarum</i>
CRINT	Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
<i>De or.</i>	<i>De oratore</i>

<i>Diatr.</i>	<i>Diatribē</i>
<i>Deus</i>	<i>Quod Deus sit immutabilis</i>
<i>DRev</i>	<i>Downside Revue</i>
<i>Ebr.</i>	<i>De ebrietate</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistle</i>
<i>ETR</i>	<i>Études théologiques et religieuses</i>
<i>EvT</i>	<i>Evangelische Theologie</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FCNTECW	Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings
<i>Frag. On Deut.</i>	<i>Fragment on Deuteronomy</i>
<i>Fug.</i>	<i>De fuga et inventionē</i>
<i>Gig.</i>	<i>De gigantibus</i>
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
<i>Her.</i>	<i>Quis rerum divinarum heres sit</i>
<i>Hom. Jo.</i>	<i>Homilies on John</i>
<i>Hom. Rom.</i>	<i>Homilies on Romans</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
<i>Icar.</i>	<i>Icaromenippus</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Institutiones oratoriae</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>Ira</i>	<i>De ira</i>
IRT	Issues in Religion and Theology
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>J ECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>Ios.</i>	<i>De Iosepho</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>Laud. Paul.</i>	<i>De laudibus sancti Pauli apostoli</i>
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LEC	Library of Early Christianity
<i>Leg.</i>	<i>Legum allegoriae</i>
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
<i>Marc.</i>	<i>Adversus Marcionem</i>
<i>Migr.</i>	<i>De migratione Abrahami</i>
<i>Mos.</i>	<i>De vita Mosis</i>
<i>Mut.</i>	<i>De mutatione nominum</i>

NCB	New Century Bible
NE	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i>
Neot	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NIB	<i>New Interpreter's Bible</i> . Edited by Leander E. Keck. 12 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994–2004
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NRTh	<i>Nouvelle revue théologique</i>
NTL	New Testament Library
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
NTR	New Testament Readings
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
Od.	<i>Odyssey</i>
Opif.	<i>De opificio mundi</i>
Or.	<i>Oration</i>
Paed.	<i>Paedagogus</i>
PG	Patrologia Graeca
Phaedr.	<i>Phaedrus</i>
Plant.	<i>De plantatione</i>
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
Post.	<i>De posteritate Caini</i>
Praem.	<i>De praemiis et poenis</i>
Prot.	<i>Protrepticus</i>
PRSt	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
PSB	<i>Princeton Seminary Bulletin</i>
PTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
QE	<i>Questions and Answers on Exodus</i>
QG	<i>Questions and Answers on Genesis</i>
Rhet.	<i>Rhetoric</i>
RSR	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
Sac.	<i>De sacerdotio</i>
Sacr.	<i>De sacrificiis Abelis et Caini</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLTT	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
Somn.	<i>De somniis</i>
SP	Sacra Pagina

<i>Spec.</i>	<i>De specialibus legibus</i>
<i>SPhilo</i>	<i>Studia Philonica Annual</i>
SPhiloM	Studia Philonica Monographs
StPatr	Studia Patristica
<i>Strom.</i>	<i>Stromata</i>
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>Virg.</i>	<i>Hymns on Virginity</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

Introduction: Adaptability and the Fourth Gospel

A doctor does not treat those who are at the onset of an illness the same as those who are at the end, near health, nor does the teacher give the same instruction to those at the beginning of their studies, and to those who desire more advanced instructions.

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on Romans* 1.2

• • •

“The Word became flesh” and the Master took on the form of the slave. . . . He did not degrade his own nature by this descent, but elevated us, who had always been in dishonor and darkness, to ineffable glory.

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on John* 11.1

Who is the Johannine Jesus?

Almost the entirety of the Fourth Gospel centers on the question of Jesus’ identity. Much of the Gospel’s purpose lies in convincing readers to accept certain things about Jesus: that he is the divine Word, the Son of God, the resurrection and life, the Good Shepherd, and so on. But the Gospel’s narrative tension arises from many characters in the narrative either failing to recognize properly or rejecting outright these very claims about Jesus. Even when a character like Peter calls Jesus “the Holy One of God” (6:69), readers have good reason to question whether Peter comprehends what he is saying. Yet this lack of comprehension among Johannine characters seems to offer something to readers by way of properly answering the question, “Who is the Johannine Jesus?” That is, though these characters get it wrong, it seems plausible that their error aids the audience in coming to a more adequate knowledge.

This plausibility has brought about strong, sustained attention to John’s characters, especially as representative figures who aid the audience in coming round to the Evangelist’s point of view.¹ While studies focusing on Johannine

¹ To offer but a few important examples: Raymond F. Collins, “Representative Figures of the Fourth Gospel,” *DRev* 94 (1976): 26–46, 118–32; R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983); Raymond F. Collins, “From John to the Beloved Disciple: An Essay on Johannine Characters,” in *Gospel Interpretation: Narrative Critical and Social-Scientific Approaches* (ed. Jack Dean Kingsbury; Harrisburg,

characters have yielded several interesting questions, however, they have led to decidedly mixed results. Which characters are exemplary? Which offer readers with negative examples? Which characters say the right things knowingly, and which are (at least partially) ignorant? A handful of consensus positions notwithstanding (especially concerning the Beloved Disciple),² scholarship has yet to find any consistent, non-idiosyncratic means by which to answer these questions. At present, the discussion lacks a consensus on whether the Evangelist portrays this or that character positively, negatively, or otherwise.

Returning to the central question of the Gospel may, however, offer a way out of the morass. The Evangelist provides one constant among this diverse cast of characters in his Gospel: Jesus. If the Evangelist has portrayed Jesus consistently, then, by understanding Jesus more fully, that is, understanding the full breadth of his character (in both the literary and moral sense) can illuminate the rich variety of characters with whom he shares the Gospel. This raises different questions than those above, like: How does the Johannine Jesus interact with these various characters, and, moreover, does it shed any light on how readers are to understand the many unique personages who appear in the Gospel narrative? Does his interaction aid readers in answering the question regarding Jesus' identity? Does John's Jesus have any consistent trait that can provide coherence to his interactions with other figures in the Gospel?³

Pa: Trinity Press International, 1997), 200–211; Colleen M. Conway, *Men and Women in the Fourth Gospel: Gender and Johannine Characterization* (SBLDS 167; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999); Susan Hulen, *Imperfect Believers: Ambiguous Characters in the Gospel of John* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009); Christopher W. Skinner, *John and Thomas—Gospels in Conflict?: Johannine Characterization and the Thomas Question* (PTMS 115; Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2009); Christopher W. Skinner, ed., *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John* (LNTS; London: T&T Clark, 2013); Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann, eds., *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Literary Approaches to Sixty-Seven Figures in John* (WUNT 314; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013) Cornelis Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014). For a recent discussion of the Evangelist's rhetorical characterization of Jesus, see Alicia D. Myers, *Characterizing Jesus: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Fourth Gospel's Use of Scripture in Its Presentation of Jesus* (LNTS 458; London: T & T Clark, 2012); also Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 43–59. Nevertheless, more attention to the character of the Johannine Jesus seems warranted.

2 See the discussion in Chapter 6.

3 Malbon offers a helpful distinction when discussing Mark, referring to “the Markan Jesus” and “Mark’s Jesus,” as two related, but distinct aspects. She writes, “By ‘the Markan Jesus’ I refer to the character who speaks and acts in the Gospel of Mark, but by ‘Mark’s Jesus’ I refer to that more complicated presentation by the implied author that encompasses what the Markan Jesus says and does *and* what all the other characters and the Markan narrator say and do in relation to the Markan Jesus”; Elizabeth Struthers Malbon,

Such questions might seem so large as to be unanswerable. Yet illumination for these sorts of questions comes not from a new, sophisticated way of reading the Gospel. Rather, it comes from a rather ancient way of interpreting John. Ancient interpreters, for their part, very much concerned themselves with the question of Jesus' identity, since for them the matter was theological truth. And while for modern biblical critics the issue of theological truth does not serve as the primary impetus for research, these ancient interpreters (with their keen attention to detail and different set of concerns) can nevertheless aid the quest for understanding this Gospel. In particular, some interpreters—notably John Chrysostom—utilized a concept to comprehend how Jesus interacted with such a diverse cast of characters, a concept referred to as “adaptability.”⁴ This gave them a rubric within which both to understand why the Evangelist portrayed his characters with so much variety, but also to get a firmer grip on the Evangelist's understanding of Jesus' identity.

Adaptability: A Brief Overview

Writing and speaking in the late fourth and early fifth centuries in Antioch and Constantinople, John Chrysostom stood at the culmination of a longstanding tradition among Greco-Roman moralists and rhetoricians (among others) who made use of “adaptability.”⁵ Indeed, his role as an heir and developer of the concept is evident in one scholar's referring to Chrysostom as “the doctor of adaptability.”⁶ As the two citations from Chrysostom at the beginning of this chapter indicate, adaptability possessed a wide range of application in

Mark's Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2009), 231–2. In the discussion that follows, *mutatis mutandis*, I will similarly apply such a distinction, though the two presentations of Jesus in John are perhaps more entwined than in Mark.

- 4 The term “adaptability” serves as a catchall for several terms, discussed later on p. 14. This term itself is a loose translation of *συγκατάβασις*, literally “condescension.” But as David Rylaarsdam notes, “adaptability” gets beyond the patronizing connotation of “condescension,” and more fully translates the wide range for which was used; David M. Rylaarsdam, “The Adaptability of Divine Pedagogy: Sunkatabasis in the Theology and Rhetoric of John Chrysostom” (PhD Dissertation, University of Notre Dame, 1999), 19.
- 5 Cf. K. Duchatelez, “La ‘Condescendance’ Divine et L’histoire Du Salut,” *NRT* 6 (1973): 593–621; Rylaarsdam, “The Adaptability of Divine Pedagogy,” 33; Margaret M. Mitchell, “Pauline Accommodation and ‘Condescension’ (*συγκατάβασις*): 1 Cor 9:19–23 and the History of Influence,” in *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 197–214.
- 6 Duchatelez, “La ‘Condescendance,’” 601.

antiquity, as Chrysostom could refer to it both when talking about such mundane affairs as education and medicine, yet also when describing the salvific effects of the incarnation. Throughout his sermons on an array of topics and texts, he also makes use of the idea to describe his pastoral practice, which was in his mind but a paltry imitation of the adaptable behavior of God in Christ.⁷

Steeped within moralistic and rhetorical traditions that made use of this concept and so being familiar with its features, Chrysostom was well aware of the many applications of “adaptability” and its salient features. In other words, he could identify adaptability when he saw it. Notably, Chrysostom believed he saw in the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel a great degree of adaptable behavior, both in the incarnation as well as in Jesus’ interactions with various characters throughout the Gospel narrative. Might Chrysostom’s conclusions on the identity of the Johannine Jesus, and the adaptability concept itself, contribute anything to present-day readings of the Gospel?

To begin answering this question, it will help to overview briefly the key points of the adaptability concept so as to apprehend its potential utility for interpretation.⁸ In Christian thought prior to Chrysostom, adaptability tended to refer to two key events, the incarnation and the giving of the Law, and tended to focus on *divine* (rather than human) adaptability. The most prevalent application was with respect to the incarnation, and depictions of the incarnation as divine adaptability can be seen in the works of authors like Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Chrysostom’s younger contemporary, Augustine.⁹ They saw the Word becoming human as a means for humanity to become divine.¹⁰ The other common subject to which early Christians applied adaptability was the Mosaic Law. Many thought the Mosaic covenant and its strictures were temporary concessions that had now been superseded by God’s activity in Christ, in the same way an adaptable teacher might allow a student to accept benign falsehoods so long as they facilitated learning, and only with the student’s maturity would the teacher disabuse him or her of such misconceptions.¹¹ Occasionally, as in the work of Clement of Alexandria, even Greek philosophy could be viewed as a sort of *praeparatio evangelica* motivated by God’s accommodating and adapting

7 Rylaarsdam, “The Adaptability of Divine Pedagogy,” 293–347.

8 Though for a fuller discussion of adaptability, see Chapter 1.

9 See Stephen D. Benin, *The Footprints of God: Divine Accommodation in Jewish and Christian Thought* (SUNY Series in Judaica; Albany: SUNY Press, 1993).

10 See, e.g., Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.1; Clement of Alexandria, *Prot.* 1.8.4.

11 Benin, *The Footprints of God*, 5.; cf. also Stephen D. Benin, “The ‘Cunning of God’ and Divine Accommodation,” *JHI* 45 (1984): 184.

nature, intended to draw more people to salvation. In short, many Christians in antiquity (including Chrysostom) understood their God as characterized by adaptability.

These Christian writers were not inventing adaptability *de novo*, but rather drew from a common trope found (especially, though not exclusively) in Greco-Roman rhetoric and moral philosophy.¹² Prior to and even after the Christian appropriation of the idea for theological explication, one can see adaptability in works ranging in time from Plato to the emperor Julian, some eight centuries at least.¹³ In Plato's *Phaedrus* (c. 370 BCE), Socrates makes reference to the ideal rhetor as one who adapts his speech to the variety of dispositions in the audience to lead them all toward virtue.¹⁴ The Epicurean Philodemus (c. 110–40/35 BCE) instructs his teachers to make use of both harsh and gentle words in the moral formation of their students.¹⁵ Others, like Dio Chrysostom (c. 40–c. 120 CE), envisioned the most virtuous person as one who made use of any means necessary to inspire others to a common pursuit of virtue.¹⁶ Above all, in these ideal instances of adaptability the person adapting should strive for the benefit of as many people as possible, whether poor, rich, wise, or foolish.¹⁷

The theological application of “adaptability” among Christian authors should not obscure this basic aspect of adaptability, namely that adaptability develops out of a person's character (again, both in the literary and moral sense).¹⁸ In this light, the Christian portrayal of the incarnation as divine adaptability (among other things) serves to underscore a fundamental aspect of the character of the Christian God and, more directly, Jesus. When Christian theologians referred to the adaptability of Christ in taking on human flesh, they were making significant claims about Jesus' identity that go beyond the

12 As Glad makes clear, adaptability does not belong exclusively to these realms in the Greco-Roman world, but there it appears most fully formed; Clarence E. Glad, “Paul and Adaptability,” in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; New York: Trinity Press International, 2003), 17–25.

13 Though see Robert C. Hill, “On Looking Again at Sunkatabasis,” *Prudentia* 13 (1981): 3–11, who discusses the concept as it influenced and appeared in the works of John Calvin.

14 *Phaedrus* 270b–272a.

15 *On Frank Criticism*, fr. 58.7–8.

16 *Or.* 77/78.37–39.

17 Already one may think of Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 9:22: “I have become all things to all people, in order that I might somehow win some.”

18 An excellent discussion of character, consistency, and adaptability in Chrysostom (as an heir of Greco-Roman traditions) is Margaret M. Mitchell, “‘A Variable and Many-sorted Man’: John Chrysostom's Treatment of Pauline Inconsistency,” *JECs* 6 (1998): 93–111.

ontological and soteriological issues and into ethical concerns. Moreover, when John Chrysostom refers to Jesus' adaptability in his homilies on John, his discussion of adaptability frequently (if implicitly) addresses the question, "Who is this person?" It is a question he answers through close attention not only to the theological concepts found within the Gospel, but also in his explication of Jesus' interactions with other persons in the Gospel narrative. Time and again he sees Jesus in both theological and interpersonal ways as a fundamentally adaptable character.

The Problem: The Paired Characters in the Gospel

Chrysostom's focus on the character of Jesus, however, stands in contrast to those modern discussions of characters in John mentioned earlier. In particular, what many scholars have attended to are the pairs of characters in the Gospel. These pairs have offered the grounds for many scholars to explicate what constitutes an adequate response to the Johannine Jesus, usually focusing on one half of the pair as the positive model, and the other providing the negative. To be sure, many such investigations also orient themselves according to the Gospel's strong dualistic framework, which divides light from dark, above from below, and insiders from outsiders.

One of the more striking comparisons comes early in the Gospel, where the privileged, elite Nicodemus stands across from the lowly woman of Samaria.¹⁹ Typically, scholars see Nicodemus as frustrated and misunderstanding, and his dialogue with Jesus comes to nothing, whereas the Samaritan woman appears perceptive and responds positively by way of her witness (4:39–42). The contrast, then, seems to favor one over the other. In a different way, the sisters of Bethany also provide interpreters with a nice binary of good/bad responses to Jesus. Martha's "I believe you are the Messiah . . ." (11:27) many take as a mature faith in Jesus, whereas Mary only questions Jesus and weeps (vv. 32–33), showing a failure to understand Jesus' power. Only after the raising of her brother does she offer a positive example, as she washes Jesus' feet (12:1–8). But is the contrast offered up by the Evangelist really so evident?

Things become more complicated further on in the Gospel. At the resurrection scenes of John 20, the Evangelist appears to juxtapose Mary Magdalene and Thomas, but which follower comes out better remains unclear. Yes, Mary is commanded not to touch Jesus, but is given the dignified task of reporting the

19 Each of the pairs listed in the following paragraphs I will discuss more fully in subsequent chapters, along with the relevant scholarship on these characters.

resurrection to Jesus' disciples. Meanwhile, Jesus invites Thomas to touch him, but then apparently Jesus rebukes Thomas for his needing tangible evidence in order to believe. Which follower responds more appropriately? The same question comes up in the contrast between Peter and the Beloved Disciple, though reaching considerably more agreement as to the answer. By nearly all counts, the Beloved Disciple is one of the finer examples of ideal discipleship in the Gospel. By contrast, Peter comes across as faithless, foolhardy, and fickle. More recent scholarship has wondered if the Evangelist offers this pairing not so much a contrast as a complementary pair,²⁰ though such attempts to reframe this last pair have not resulted in markedly altered views of the previous ones.

One might notice, even in this brief summary, that the focus of the interpretive discourse on these pairs falls primarily on the minor characters of the Gospel. In a reversal, then, the main character, Jesus, often receives the least attention in these treatments. Thus the focus falls more on characters' responses to Jesus than on Jesus' responses to those characters, and when Jesus' responses are examined, often they serve only as evaluative markers. So, when Jesus tells Nicodemus, "You are a teacher of Israel, and you do not understanding these things?" (3:10), this is characteristically taken as a negative evaluation of Nicodemus. Or when Jesus tells Thomas to touch his wounds and "be not unbelieving but believing" (20:27), scholars presume this is a rebuke of Thomas' character.

The Johannine Jesus, however, never offers readers the explicit types of evaluations offered by many in their comments on these paired characters. Not even his "rebuke" of Thomas do all take as self-evidently a negative evaluation, nor do all agree that Nicodemus is a negative exemplar. So if the Evangelist hopes to signal to his audience which models to follow and which to avoid, he has done so in a way so subtle as to frustrate much broad agreement among that audience. The challenge the Gospel presents to readers regarding these paired characters, then, is to discern a kind of coherence to their presentation. Why has the Evangelist taken so many pains to present these contrasted interactions with Jesus? And why does Jesus respond so radically different to each member of the pair? It may be that the Johannine Jesus is fundamentally inconsistent, or that some characters do indeed respond more appropriately than others. Adaptability, however, provides another, and I think more persuasive possibility.

20 Notably, Richard Bauckham, "The Beloved Disciple as Ideal Author," *JSNT* 49 (1993): 21–44.

Adaptability and John's Jesus

Chrysostom's dogged focus on the Johannine Jesus, and his sensitivity to adaptable pedagogy provides him a sense of coherence to the presentation of Jesus in the Gospel lacking in more modern treatments. Building upon his insights, in the following study I will show how pervasive and connected the notion of adaptability is in the Fourth Gospel. I will argue that the Evangelist's portrayal of Jesus draws upon the adaptability *topos* to characterize Jesus as an adaptable psychagogue (or "soul guide").²¹ Adaptability pertains not only to Jesus' interpersonal interactions, but also to the Gospel's theological framework. In other words, the Johannine Jesus varies his teaching and discourse according to the needs of his interlocutors, but this is an expression of the same disposition that produced the incarnation, which occurs as a means to bring the otherwise inaccessible God near to humanity. Both the theological and interpersonal aspects have similar characteristics, in that, for example, both arise out of divine compassion and both involve accommodation to the needs of others.

Moreover, adaptability brings the issue of discipleship into clearer focus. Discipleship in John is not a static reality, but rather a *process*, and one in which each character makes progress according to his or her own capacities. Moreover, as I will show, Jesus' adaptability allows different people to respond to him differently, and this variety of responses also depicts a range of appropriate reactions to Jesus' work and words. If anything, the contrasting pairs of characters in the Gospel underscore the wide range of possibilities for responding to Jesus.

In the first chapter of this study, I will take up a detailed analysis of the concept of adaptability in the world of the Fourth Evangelist. This will involve exploring a wide range of authors who participate in the cultural milieu of the Gospel, beginning as early as Plato and Aristotle and extending as far as the fourth century CE, since voices even after the Gospel's composition can illustrate the salient aspects of adaptability shared throughout the Greco-Roman world. The various authors come from diverse backgrounds and deal with several topics, though the majority focus on elements of adaptability that lead to the acquisition and improvement of virtue. The authors explored also come from pagan, Jewish, and Christian backgrounds, emphasizing the

21 Alternatively, I will refer to Jesus as a pedagogue, although psychagogy has a narrower definition than pedagogy; see Clarence E. Glad, *Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychagogy* (NovTSup 81; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 58.

widespread use of the notion in various circles, all drawing from a common cultural well.²²

Philo of Alexandria provides an important example of someone who participates in more than one of these backgrounds and who employs the idea of adaptability. Philo's manifest affinity with many of the ideas and authors that will be described in Chapter 1 will show him as a helpful link to the Fourth Gospel, a link that will be explored in Chapter 2. In particular, Philo's Logos theology, which has a similar structure to the Logos theology of the Fourth Gospel, develops out of the adaptability *topos* in significant ways. Yet Philo only begins to illuminate adaptability in the Fourth Gospel. Joining up adaptability in the Logos theology of the Gospel with the characteristics of adaptability outlined in Chapter 1, I will begin to illustrate various instances of adaptability in John. Furthermore, I will highlight ways in which adaptability can aid in the interpretation of several difficult aspects of the Gospel.

In the Gospel narrative, adaptability appears most vividly not in the sweeping theological vision, but in Jesus' various accommodating actions toward diverse individuals. So in Chapter 3, I will analyze Jesus' dialogues with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, comparing Jesus' behavior toward these utterly dissimilar characters. With Nicodemus, Jesus must first bring him to recognize his perceptive incapacities before revealing to him divine truths. With the woman, however, Jesus works to lead her gradually to an ever-increasing appreciation of his mission and identity. Despite using starkly contrasted methods, the Johannine Jesus aims to bring both to salvation and understanding.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I examine two resurrection scenes in the Gospel. The first (examined in Chapter 4) involves Jesus attempting both to console and instruct two sisters of a dead man. To each woman, Jesus responds quite differently, yet his actions are directed to the specific needs of each woman to help her receive both comfort in their sorrow and understanding of Jesus' identity, culminating in their brother Lazarus's resurrection. A similar situation emerges in John 20 (the focus of Chapter 5), as Jesus (himself resurrected) appears to both Mary and Thomas. Despite his contrasted means of revealing himself to them—slowly to Mary and suddenly to Thomas—and his instructions—to Mary, "Don't touch me" (20:17) and the command for Thomas to touch him (20:27)—Jesus leads both to comprehend the import of his resurrection.

22 To be sure, there are important differences among these various groups, but in many ways their common cultural context nevertheless influences (and is influenced by) each particular perspective.

A more complex comparison presents itself in Jesus' discipleship of Simon Peter and the Beloved Disciple, the subject of Chapter 6. Jesus must prepare both disciples for leadership in the Christian community after his departure, but they will each play a different role. Furthermore, the unique needs of each character differ, and so demand from Jesus a different approach. As I will show, with Simon Peter Jesus must redirect the disciple's energy and commitment with a heavy hand, allowing Peter to fail and deny his master in order for Peter finally to submit to God's will rather than pursuing his own, and in so doing become a shepherd of the sheep. In guiding the Beloved Disciple, Jesus takes a very different tack: to transform him into an effective witness, Jesus uses a subtler touch than he uses with Peter. He positions the disciple to be near to himself in order that this disciple might witness several key events, and then Jesus empowers him to give testimony about those events. Yet as with the other characters, Jesus' diverse actions derive from a singular aim, namely to bring people to salvation.

The picture that will emerge from this study is a Jesus who acts in ways that look very much like the adaptability of the Evangelist's contemporaries. Yet the value in this recognition is not simply to provide another heuristic tool for understanding the Evangelist's narrative, thought, and context. It also offers a logic by which to comprehend the many different responses to Jesus, without needing to determine which response is better than any other. Moreover, it also offers sustained attention to the Gospel's central character. In the end, the answer to the question, "Who is this person?" will be the same that Chrysostom himself saw: this person, Jesus, is the adaptable Logos.

A Note on Method

The study that follows will remain focused on the narrative world of the Gospel, and will explore primarily the characters who appear therein. For this reason, in addition to relying upon the concept of adaptable pedagogy (outlined in the following chapter), this investigation will rely heavily on literary critical methods, specifically those that attend to character. Moreover, the focus of this study falls primarily upon the narrative world created by the Evangelist, i.e., the story he tells, rather than upon his intended audience, his rhetorical engagement with that audience, or (for the most part) questions of the composition.²³ In other words, the main focus will be on the world *of* the text, not that *behind* or *before* it.

23 I am well aware of the distinction in literary criticism between the narrator and the implied author, as well as real author. Nevertheless, I find this distinction in the Fourth

As far as the general method of characterization taken up in the following, I align in large part with the methods of characterization in John laid out by Cornelis Bennema.²⁴ Taking Bennema's lead, I hold that analyzing characterization in ancient literature (like the Fourth Gospel) can benefit greatly from attending to both modern and ancient literary notions of how characters are portrayed in literature. I particularly agree with his use of critics like Alter or Sternberg,²⁵ whose works explore classic Hebrew texts using tools ancient and modern. Furthermore, I follow Bennema in rejecting dichotomies in characterization, such as flat/round, active/static, etc., but instead view characters along various spectra of development, with some characters more or less developed than others.²⁶ And, as a last note on characterization in John, the Evangelist most frequently *shows* rather than tells many of the subtler aspects of his characters, and so noticing such aspects requires attention to many fine details—another point at which Chrysostom provides a reliable guide in interpretation.

My attention to character and characterization, however, is informed rather than dictated by methodological considerations from literary criticism.²⁷ Instead, this study interacts with reception history (especially Origen and John Chrysostom), analysis of the complex matrix of Hellenism and Hellenistic Judaism, and careful consideration of the Gospel's overarching theology and

Gospel to offer only a limited interpretive value, and so will conflate these roles under the single title, "The Evangelist," and less often, "John."

- 24 See especially his two attempts to discuss a theory of characterization most explicitly: Cornelis Bennema, "A Theory of Character in the Fourth Gospel with Reference to Ancient and Modern Literature," *BibInt* 17 (2009): 375–421; idem, "A Comprehensive Approach to Understanding Character in the Gospel of John," in *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John* (ed. Christopher W. Skinner; LNTS; London: T&T Clark, 2013), 36–59. See also Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann, "An Introduction to Character and Characterization in John and Related New Testament Literature," in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (ed. Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann; WUNT 314; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 1–33.
- 25 Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981); Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Indiana Literary Biblical Series; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).
- 26 In this I agree not only with Bennema ("A Theory of Character"), but also Hylen, *Imperfect Believers*; Skinner, *John and Thomas*.
- 27 Cf. Malbon, *Mark's Jesus*, 14, along roughly similar lines: "My question is, How does the Gospel of Mark characterize Jesus? not, How can characterization be theorized within narrative criticism or within linguistically based rhetoric? or, How can a particular theoretical construction of characterization be applied to Mark's Gospel or Mark's Jesus? In addition . . . , my work is more literary than theological. Again, my question is, *How* does the Gospel of Mark characterize Jesus? not, *What* is the Christology of Mark's Gospel?"

purpose. In other words, the study that follows will attempt to draw upon traditional historical-critical methods, newer literary-critical methods, as well as reception-historical ones, in an attempt to bring these very different approaches into a fruitful discourse about the Fourth Gospel's presentation of Jesus. How this method works itself out will become clearer in the following two chapters.

Adaptability in the World of the Fourth Gospel: Presuppositions and Principles

Many bowmen, their quivers full of words of all sorts and kinds, shoot at the soul during life, but not with success in every case. [...] But a good Bowman like Nigrinus first of all scans the target closely for fear that it may be either very soft or too hard for his arrow—for of course there are impenetrable targets. When he is clear on this point, he dips his arrow, not in venom [...] but in a sweet, gently-working drug, and then shoots with skill. The arrow, driven by just the right amount of force, penetrates to the point of passing through, and then sticks fast and gives off a quantity of the drug, which naturally spreads and completely pervades the soul.

LUCIAN, *Nigrinus* 35–37¹

Adaptability Defined

In order to identify adaptability within the text of the Fourth Gospel, I should first describe precisely what the category of “adaptability” entailed in the milieu out of which the Gospel arose. The concept was a long-standing commonplace within Greek and Roman culture, and Jewish and Christian authors made fruitful use of it in theological discussions. Furthermore, a very particular kind of adaptability, especially *pedagogical/psychagogical* adaptability, fits best the type of adaptability one would expect to see with respect to a religious or moral guide. The aim of this chapter, then, is to provide an overview of the major components of this sort of adaptability as evidenced in works that share the Fourth Gospel’s cultural context. In so doing, I will make reference to several texts—Jewish, Christian, and Greco-Roman—that will illustrate the concept and demonstrate its currency, to lay the groundwork for the identification and exploration of the concept in the Gospel itself.²

1 Adapted from the translation in Abraham J. Malherbe, ed., *Moral Exhortation: A Greco-Roman Sourcebook* (LEC 4; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986), 57.

2 I am not interested in determining whether the Evangelist relied directly on any of the sources studied throughout this chapter. Instead, I follow Glad’s approach (though attending

In its broadest sense, “adaptability” in antiquity refers to a person’s ability to accommodate to a variety of people and circumstances, all while maintaining a consistent character. Viewed this way, one can find “adaptability” discussed in a wide range of texts in the Greco-Roman world pertaining to philosophy, rhetoric, ethics, friendship, and others.³ In addition to appearing in several different genres and settings, the idea also recurs over a lengthy period of time, stretching back several centuries before the Common Era to the end of the Fourth Century CE.⁴ Ancient authors rarely relied upon a single term for referring to the concept of adaptability, however, making the terminology as supple as the concept. Authors employed a range of words, including ἀρμόζω, ἐφαρμόζω, προσαρμόζω, ἐξομοιόω, συνεξομοιόω, συναφομοιόω, συμπεριφέρω, συμπεριφορά, συγκαταβαίνειν, συνκατάβασις, and οἰκονομία.⁵ None of these words serves as the “catchword” for adaptability among ancient authors, though (συν)κατάβασις, συμπεριφορά, and οἰκονομία, with their related terms, appear to have

to John rather than Paul); Glad writes: “the need to adapt to different audiences, segments of audiences, times and locations, was a commonly valued principle among philosophers, moralists, and orators, as well of some of Paul’s Jewish contemporaries and predecessors” (*Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychagogy* [NovTSup 81; Leiden: Brill, 1995], 7). That is, with such a broad “principle” as adaptability circulating in the broader culture, proving the direct influence of any of these texts on John is both unnecessary and nearly impossible.

- 3 Clarence E. Glad, “Paul and Adaptability,” in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; New York: Trinity Press International, 2003), 17.
- 4 Though such a wide timeframe might seem overly broad, Malherbe notes the continuity of notions of psychagogy across time and philosophical traditions: “It was the Epicureans who had developed the system of psychagogy, but what Philodemus says in the first century BC is reflected in the writings of Seneca, Paul’s Stoic contemporary, and a generation later by the Platonist Plutarch. In short, the concerns and techniques that interest us were widespread at the time Paul wrote,” and I might add “as well as the time of the Fourth Evangelist” (Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987], 84). Moreover, D.M. Rylaarsdam (“The Adaptability of Divine Pedagogy: Sunkatabasis in the Theology and Rhetoric of John Chrysostom” [Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1999], 33) stresses that John Chrysostom, like many other early Christian writers (including, notably, Clement and Origen), was trained in classical rhetoric and had a significant awareness of a number of common ideas of Greco-Roman culture. Other important witnesses to the concept of adaptability in the early church included (among others), Tertullian, the Cappadocians, Athanasius, and Theodore of Mopsuestia; for more, see Stephen D. Benin, *The Footprints of God: Divine Accommodation in Jewish and Christian Thought* (SUNY Series in Judaica; Albany: SUNY Press, 1993).
- 5 Terms in this list also appear in Glad, “Paul and Adaptability,” 37n1.

been the favorites of early Christian authors, such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and John Chrysostom.⁶

Many authors, despite employing varying terminology and writing at different times, focus their attention on a particular kind of adaptability: psychagogical adaptability. Psychagogical adaptability—or *pedagogical* adaptability⁷—suggests the guidance of an individual toward a particular goal, namely, growth in virtue and understanding.⁸ An adaptable teacher thus concerns himself not only with speaking appropriately to different people (rhetoric) or with how to treat those diverse people (ethics), but also cares for the improvement of the person's character. And it is this type of adaptability that most suits the content of the Fourth Gospel, since one of the main concerns of the Johannine Jesus is the communication of truth and inspiring belief, leading to a particular way of life (cf. 8:32; 10:38; 11:42; 13:19; 18:37).⁹ For this reason, I will train my focus on this particular variation of adaptability throughout this study.

Two passages from authors writing within a century of the Fourth Gospel's composition, Dio Chrysostom (ca. 40CE–ca. 120) and Clement of Alexandria

6 See the examples in Margaret M. Mitchell, "Pauline Accommodation and 'Condescension' (συγκατάβασις): 1 Cor 9:19–23 and the History of Influence," in *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 209–12.

7 For the interrelationship between these "pedagogy" and "psychagogy," particularly in moral contexts, see Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*, 58: "[P]sychagogy can be viewed as a means of moral instruction since the inculcation of a certain view of ourselves and reality is latent in psychagogy. On the highest level of generalization, psychagogy is thus a pedagogical activity where the formation of a certain *paideia* is in view. Here, the pedagogical function of the psychagogue comes to the fore, insofar as we understand *paideia* as inclusive of the endeavor to make a person fit for life, including the formation of a person's moral and religious attitudes. One should thus attempt to elucidate ancient psychagogic theory as a reflection of certain form of pedagogy."

8 I will refer to "virtue" and "vice" throughout this chapter, in no small part because the terms ἀρετή/τὸ καλόν and κακία/τὸ αἰσχρόν appear frequently in the works with which I engage here. Respective of each, I mean primarily that which an author perceives to be indicative of moral goodness or badness, ideas that extend far beyond the presence of particular words. In this way, one might well argue that "virtue" and "vice" appear even within the Fourth Gospel, when the Evangelist refers to "life" and "death," "loving" and "hating," etc., even though reference to specific "virtue/vice" terminology might be found wanting (though καλός appears in 10:11, 14, 33).

9 Pedagogical activity is apparent in the career of the Johannine Jesus, as his first disciples address him as "Rabbi" in 1:38, 49; and when arrested, "the chief priests asked Jesus about his disciples [τῶν μαθητῶν, lit. "learners"] and his teaching [τῆς διδασχῆς]" (18:19).

(ca. 150CE–ca. 215), exemplify well this kind of adaptability, and point to its salient traits:

The [truly courageous, high-minded] person of whom I speak will strive to preserve himself nobly and steadfastly, never deserting his post of duty, but always honoring and promoting virtue and sobriety and trying to lead all people thereunto, partly by persuading and exhorting, partly by abusing and reproaching, in the hope that he may thereby rescue some from folly and from low desires and intemperance and soft living, taking them aside privately one by one and also admonishing them in groups every time he finds the opportunity, ‘with gentle words at times, at others harsh’ [Homer, *Iliad* 12.267].¹⁰

In some places God rebukes; in others he even threatens; some people he laments; for others he sings: just as a good doctor, in dealing with diseased bodies, uses poulticing for some, rubbing for others, and bathing for others; some he cuts with a knife, others he cauterizes, and in some cases he even amputates, if by any means he can restore the patient to health by removing some part or limb. So the Savior uses many tones and many devices in working for the salvation of humanity. His threats are for warning; his rebukes for converting; his lamentation to show pity; his song to encourage. He speaks through a burning bush (for people of old had need of signs and portents), and he strikes terror into people by fire, kindling the flame out of a cloudy pillar, as a token at the same time of grace and fear, to the obedient light, to the disobedient fire.¹¹

In both of these passages, the authors refer to the singular character of the person who accommodates to others, and yet who utilizes a wide range of techniques to instruct, guide, and heal different sorts of people. That is, in these two passages I would distinguish between two discrete categories under which to discuss adaptability: its presuppositions (e.g., the guide’s character) and its practices (variation in technique).¹² These two major categories will provide the framework for the discussion below.

10 Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 77/78.38–39 (Crosby, LCL; with some emendations).

11 Clement of Alexandria, *Prot.* 1.8.2.4 (Butterworth, LCL; with some emendations).

12 In the discussion that follows, however, there will be overlap in these two areas of presuppositions and practices, as the character of the adaptable teacher can often be illustrated by reference to his accommodating actions.

In exploring psychagogical adaptability along these two divisions, I will describe several diverse aspects of the concept. Therefore, it will be beneficial here at the beginning to outline the features of adaptability appropriate to the present study:

I. Presuppositions:

A. Character of the Adaptable Guide

1. Knowledge
2. Humility and Philanthropy
3. Consistency of Character

B. Aims of Instruction

1. Knowledge of Virtue and the Self
2. Virtue
3. Salvation

II. Practices:

A. The Principle of Expedience

B. Initiating the Journey

1. Persuasion
2. Provocation and Invitation

C. Accommodating the Form of Communication

1. Speaking the Students' Language
2. Allowing for Concessions
3. Providing a Model for Imitation
4. Employing Corporeal Signs

D. Variation

1. Different Approaches for Different Persons
2. Adapting to Change
3. Gentle and Harsh Instruction

E. Progression

1. Appropriate "Curriculum"
2. Repetition and Teaching by Degree

In this outline, one can see that the character of the guide is just as important as what he does, since despite the adaptability of behavior, the guide must maintain a fixed and stable character. In other words, the adaptable guide marks himself out from the flatterer or the charlatan through his unswerving commitment to the improvement of the student. This contrast will become much clearer later on.

As a final point of clarification, however, I should distinguish between *divine* adaptability and that of humans.¹³ For many authors, like Clement of Alexandria, who discuss the ways in which God/the gods accommodate to humanity to teach, guide, etc., the distinction between deity and humanity is more of *degree* than of kind. When God acts as teacher, God speaks and acts in ways that humanity can understand, in the same way that an experienced philosopher adjusts his discourse to the level of his students. God's degree of accommodation significantly outstrips that of the human teacher, yet in both instances, the teacher must simplify the content for the immature student.¹⁴ For this reason, I will freely move between examples of both divine and human adaptability, since both draw from the same stock of ideas and images.

Presuppositions of Adaptability

The Character of the Adaptable Guide

Discussions of adaptability in its many varieties assumed a good deal about the person doing the accommodating, as well as the aims of any adaptable behavior. Those presuppositions tended to change with the arena in which adaptability was taking place—in medicine, in instruction, or in rhetoric—but each of these settings carried similar assumptions regarding the people adapting and what they intended to do. With psychagogical adaptability in particular, many of the presuppositions related to issues of character. That is, in *ideal* psychagogy the adaptable instructor understood the subject matter and the varieties of human dispositions, while possessing a virtuous and beneficent character directed toward the improvement of his students' character.

Knowledge

As in any other form of instruction, the adaptable psychagogue would need thorough knowledge of whatever content his students needed to master.¹⁵

13 Mitchell, "Pauline Accommodation," 212, notes how Paul's own accommodation comes in imitation of *divine* accommodation that took place in the incarnation. Paul's act of adapting to his various audiences paled in comparison with Christ's own, and *a fortiori* his variability in action had precedent and warrant. See also Mitchell, "'A Variable and Many-sorted Man': John Chrysostom's Treatment of Pauline Inconsistency," *J ECS* 6 (1998): 106–107.

14 Indeed, for Clement the Word provided the paradigm for all human pedagogues (Judith L. Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher according to Clement of Alexandria," *J ECS* 9 [2001]: 7).

15 Glad, "Paul and Adaptability," 19–20.

This knowledge covers several areas: knowledge of the self, of the diversity of human souls, of virtue and vice, of the dispositions of each person, and of the variety of methods and their application. The knowledge of the self is perhaps the most foundational. Julian (331–363CE) advises anyone wishing to enter into philosophy—that is, someone who desires to instruct others on how to live rightly—should begin by thoroughly examining himself, to purge himself of vice and strengthen himself in virtue.¹⁶ Only then, after rigorous self-examination and testing, would one have sufficient knowledge of virtue to instruct others, not to mention having lived out such virtues. Dio Chrysostom would affirm such a stance, for “the philosopher is always master of himself; and this is altogether more difficult than to be king over all the Greeks or all the barbarians. For what race is as savage as are anger and envy and contentiousness, things over which the philosopher must maintain control?”¹⁷ To instruct others in their struggles, the guide must possess thorough knowledge of virtue and vice alike, knowledge gained only through victory over the self.¹⁸

The adaptable teacher should also know the varieties of human souls, as well as the needs of each individual kind. Seneca the Younger (ca. 4BCE–65CE), for example, describes three varieties of virtuous persons, and the kinds of problems faced by each. These things the psychagogue must know in order to guide all most effectively.¹⁹ In Plato’s *Phaedrus*, Socrates tells his young friend of this dual requirement of knowledge:

A man must know the truth about all the particular things of which he speaks or writes, and must be able to define everything separately; then when he has defined them, he must know how to divide them by classes until further division is impossible; and in the same way he must understand the nature of the soul, must find out the class of speech adapted to each nature, and must arrange and adorn his discourse accordingly, offering to the complex soul elaborate and harmonious discourses, and simple talks to the simple soul. Until he has attained to all this, he will not

16 *Or.* 6.200c–201c.

17 *Or.* 49.9 (Crosby, LCL).

18 This echoes Socrates’ thought in Xenophon’s *Economics* (though in a slightly different line of thought): “Those things found to be beneficial are all those things someone knows how to use” (6.4).

19 *Ep.* 75. For what remains the fullest discussion of Seneca’s view of psychagogy, see Ilsetraut Hadot, *Seneca und die griechisch-römische Tradition der Seelenleitung* (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie 9; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969).

be able to speak by the method of art, so far as speech can be controlled by method, either for purposes of instruction or of persuasion.²⁰

Every competent teacher should master the subject matter. But Socrates also indicates what adaptability uniquely requires: understanding of the human condition.

In order to deal adequately with any particular vice or destructive habit, the adaptable teacher must, like a doctor, understand both the illness and its treatments.²¹ Again, Socrates in the *Phaedrus* provides an excellent illustration of this, as he compares medicine and oration: “The method of the art of healing is much the same as that of rhetoric,” because “in both cases you must analyze a nature, in one that of the body and in the other that of the soul, if you are to proceed in a scientific manner, not merely by practice and routine, to impart health and strength to the body by prescribing medicine and diet, or by proper discourses and training to give to the soul the desired belief and virtue.”²² The adaptable teacher, then, whether human or divine, had to possess the knowledge of the wide variety of curative techniques in order to discern the best one at any given time.²³

Pedagogical adaptability also requires an understanding of the variety of personalities, dispositions, and so on. Plato’s Socrates articulates the point

20 *Phaedr.* 277b–c (Fowler, LCL).

21 Seneca, for one, devotes much of *Ep.* 75 to the metaphor of philosopher as doctor, and in *Ep.* 64 he illustrates the necessity for a physician to be adaptable:

“But even if the old masters have discovered everything, one thing will always be new, the application . . . of the discoveries made by others. . . . Assume that prescriptions have been handed down to us for the healing of the eyes; there is no need of my searching for others in addition. . . . But these prescriptions must be adapted to the particular disease and to the particular stage of the disease. Watch for the right time of their application, and apply the proper treatment in each case. . . . It is our task to learn the method and the time of treatment (tr. in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 66).”

22 *Phaedr.* 270b (Fowler, LCL); see also 271b–d. See also Musonius Rufus, fr. 36; Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.23.30–32; 3.21.8–9.

23 Plutarch (ca. 46CE–120), in *Sera* 4, applies the physician metaphor to the way in which Providence metes out punishments, since God, like a doctor, knows the best time to act or refrain from acting, and recognizes that each case calls for unique treatment. See also John Chrysostom, *Hom. Rom.* 1.2 (PG 60.393–94): “And often elsewhere one can find Paul doing this [i.e., varying his instructions]. This is how also the doctor and the teacher customarily act. For a doctor doesn’t treat those who are at the onset of an illness the same as those who are at the end, near health, nor does the teacher give the same instruction to those at the beginning of their studies, and to those who desire more advanced instructions” (translated by Mitchell, “A Variable and Many-Sorted Man,” 102).

nicely: “Since the function of speech happens to be the leading of souls (ψυχᾶγωγία), he who is to be a rhetorician must know the various forms of soul.”²⁴ Such knowledge of individuals should aid, then, in the attempt to persuade.²⁵ Aristotle, in his *On Rhetoric*, describes the importance of knowing different character types and how each is best persuaded, since “people always think well of speeches adapted to, and reflecting, their own character: and we can now see how to compose our speeches so as to adapt both them and ourselves to our audience.”²⁶ This adaptability is not for the mere persuasive power of a speech, though, since Aristotle’s principles for rhetorical persuasion arise from the principle of the pursuit of the true and the just.²⁷ Rather, such knowledge of an audience works to guide the individuated souls of the hearers toward greater virtue and away from vice.²⁸

Similarly, an adaptable teacher must have appropriate understanding of the best time to apply methods to address a problem. Rhetorical handbooks often refer to the importance of speaking at the right time, or *καίρος*.²⁹ This applies also to the work of the psychagogue, as seen when Epictetus (55CE–135)

24 *Phaedr.* 271d (Fowler, LCL). This is *contra* the typical sophist whom Socrates views as caring not for the benefit of the audience, but only for personal gain.

25 See Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 1.6 (Trapp): “In the games of the soul, victory belongs pre-eminently to the contestant who can summon many others to compete.”

26 *Rhet.* 2.13 (Freese, LCL); see also Aristotle’s discussion on different types of characters throughout 2.12–17.

27 Cf. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.1.12. George Kennedy, in his introduction to Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, writes that Plato’s ideal rhetoric takes place in a one-to-one setting (e.g., Socrates with Phaedrus) with greater variation to an individual’s needs, but Aristotle adapted these ideals for “more realistic situations,” i.e., communicating to an audience; Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse* (trans. George Alexander Kennedy; 2nd ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 15.

28 Horace’s (65–8BCE) famous lines about poetry needing to be both beneficial and instructive further underscore the importance of adapting to an audience for their own good: “Poets aim either to benefit, or to amuse, or to utter words at once both pleasing and helpful to life. Whatever you instruct, be brief, so that what is quickly said the mind may readily grasp and faithfully hold: every word in excess flows away from the full mind. Fictions meant to please should be close to the real. . . . The centuries of the elders chase from the stage what is profitless; the proud Ramnes [i.e., the young aristocrats] disdain poems that are devoid of charms. He has won every vote who has blended profit and pleasure, at once delighting and instructing the reader (*Ars Poetica* 333–44 [Fairclough, LCL]).”

29 George A. Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 35; Abraham J. Malherbe, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 140–42; Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*, 46.

compares the philosopher who lacks skill in timing or application to an incompetent physician:

But you open a doctor's shop, though you have nothing except physic: but where and how they should be applied, you know not nor have you taken any trouble about it. See, that man says, I too have salves for the eyes. Have you also the power of using them? Do you know both when and how they will do good, and to whom they will do good? Why then do you act at hazard in things of the greatest importance? why are you careless? why do you undertake a thing that is in no way fit for you? Leave it to those who are able to do it, and to do it well.³⁰

Just as the capable psychagogue applies only tools and methods appropriate to individual persons and problems, so also will he utilize such methods only at the proper time for applying them.

As an extension of this idea of appropriate methods, the ideal adaptable teacher sometimes has to inflict pain on his students, however temporary, since he is concerned primarily with the wellbeing of his students.³¹ Maximus of Tyre (late 2nd century CE) takes up various images of adaptability to underscore this point: "It is the benevolent doctor who causes the greatest pain, and the most scrupulous general, and the most reliable helmsman. Fathers, surely, love their children and teachers their pupils; yet what could be more disagreeable than a father to his child and a teacher to his pupil?"³² The adaptable teacher, when called upon to act, will make even difficult or painful decisions, because all his actions arise from a genuine concern for those under his care.³³

Humility and Philanthropy

This genuine concern involves another presupposition, namely, the willingness to forego one's proper dignity, to be humbled, and to associate with

³⁰ *Diatr.* 3.21.20–22 (Oldfather, LCL).

³¹ Aristotle thus defines love: "Let loving, then, be defined as wishing for anyone the things which we believe to be good, for his sake but not for our own, and procuring them for him as far as lies in our power. A friend is one who loves and is loved in return, and those who think their relationship is of this character consider themselves friends" (*Rhet.* 2.4.2 [Freese, LCL]).

³² *Or.* 14.4 (Trapp). See also Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 77/78.43.

³³ In *On Frank Criticism*, fr. 12, Philodemus urges moral guides to rebuke out of a concern for the improvement of others. He recognizes, however, that even a mature guide might be tempted to rebuke when angry. As expected, Philodemus warns his readers against giving into such base impulses.

persons from every level of society.³⁴ Socrates, as Maximus of Tyre writes, made students not just from among the privileged classes, but from whom ever seemed fit for pursuing philosophy.³⁵ Dio Chrysostom similarly praises Odysseus' ability to speak admirably and persuasively, whether "in the presence of king or of commoner, freeman or slave, no matter whether he was himself held in honour and recognized as king or, on the other hand, unknown and a beggar, and, moreover, alike when addressing either man or woman or maiden."³⁶ More generally, a skilled speaker had to vary his speech so that it would persuade not only the powerful and educated, but also the poor and unlearned.³⁷ Both the guide and the orator could, to be sure, associate themselves only with the elite, but an adaptable guide, hoping to effect the greatest good among the most people, would associate with anyone who would show a willingness to learn.³⁸

Consistency of Character

Associating with all sorts of people could raise concerns, however, about the guide's consistency of character. Consistency of character almost certainly ranked as the most crucial presupposition for adaptability. While other traits mattered, the degree to which a person exhibited consistency or inconsistency attracted much more discussion. When detractors of moral philosophers wanted to discredit them, they did so by pointing out the lack of conformity between their words and deeds.³⁹ Similarly, pagan philosophers

34 Mitchell ("Pauline Accommodation," 213) writes: "The logic of condescension [=adaptability] depends upon the concept of 'weakness,' for a person or a god only needs to 'come down' to the level of those others who are in a lower state." This no doubt sounds condescending to most contemporary readers, and, to a great extent, it is. Yet such readers should note the high degree of importance persons in the Greco-Roman world placed upon status, which (unlike present-day Western societies) allowed for almost no social mobility. For an introduction to the role of status in the Greco-Roman world, see Susan Treggiari, "Social Status and Social Legislation," in *The Augustan Empire, 43 BC–AD 69* (ed. Alan K. Bowman, Edward Champlin, and Andrew Lintott; vol. 10 of *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 873–904; Richard Saller, "Status and Patronage," in *The High Empire, AD 70–192* (ed. Alan K. Bowman, Peter Garnsey, and Dominic Rathbone; vol. 11 of *The Cambridge Ancient History*, 2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 817–54.

35 Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 1.9 (Trapp).

36 Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 71.3.

37 Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*, 50–51.

38 Already one might think of the Johannine Jesus, who associates with a wide range of individuals, exemplified by his interaction with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman.

39 See, for example, Lucian, *Icar.* 29–31.

raised questions of Christians regarding their belief in divine immutability, a belief problematized by notions of the incarnation of the divine Word, when the unchangeable divine takes on mutable flesh, thus rendering the divine essence as inconstant.⁴⁰ Such criticisms presented a major problem for the adaptable teacher, then, because adaptability could often seem to resemble *inconsistency*.⁴¹ To the external observer, for example, flattery and beneficent accommodation could look very much alike.⁴² So Plutarch writes, “We must regard that which gives delight and joy as true to friendship, if at times it is able also to hurt our feelings and to resist our desires; but we must be suspicious of an association that is confined to pleasures, one whose complaisance is unmingled and without a sting.”⁴³ Thus, for pedagogical adaptability to take place, one that benefitted the student (rather than the guide himself) and resulted in greater virtue, the educator had to prove absolute consistency of character amid changing tactics.⁴⁴

40 While pre-dating Christianity by several centuries, Plato's question in *Rep.* 480D indicates such a concern of non-Christian philosophers: “Do you think that God is a wizard and capable of manifesting himself by design, now in one aspect, now in another, at one time himself changing and altering his shape in many transformations and at another deceiving us and causing us to believe such things about him; or that he is simple and less likely than anything else to depart from his form?” Such a criticism explains in part, then, why so many Christian authors, such as John Chrysostom, wrote sermons, treatises, etc., in defense of God's immutability.

41 The role of adaptable psychagogy falls somewhere in between the two sides of the classic debate between philosophy and rhetoric. Many philosophers thought the truth should be told with all frankness, unadorned by argument or persuasive appeals. Orators—and in this category one might think of Lysias as depicted in Plato's *Phaedrus*—could be understood as aiming only at pleasing or persuading the crowd for personal benefit. Adaptable psychagogy, with its sister concepts of psychagogic rhetoric and philosophical appeal, attempted to conciliate these two notions by aiming at truth telling, while accommodating to the audience for the sake of persuasion. For more, see Margaret M. Mitchell, “Patristic Counter-Evidence to the Claim That ‘The Gospels Were Written for All Christians,’” *NTS* 51 (2005): 62.

42 For some exemplary instances of negative characterizations of flatterers among moralists, see Plutarch and Maximus of Tyre, both of whom wrote essays dealing with distinguishing between flatterers and friends (*Adul. amic.*; *Oration* 14); Cicero likewise wrote on the subject in *Amic.* 25–26. For a fuller introduction to friendship and flattery in ancient Greco-Roman authors, see David Konstan, “Friendship, Frankness, and Flattery,” in *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World* (ed. John T. Fitzgerald; NovTSup 82; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 7–20.

43 Plutarch, *Adul. Amic.* 55DE (Babbitt, LCL). See also 59C–60C.

44 See, e.g., Ps.-Diogenes, *Ep.* 15. John Chrysostom makes this particular remark about interpreting Paul: “You see that if we do not choose his words with proper discretion, and look

Nowhere else is the problem of consistency seen more clear than in the contested interpretation of Odysseus, the “variable and many-sorted man” (ποικίλος and πολύτροπος).⁴⁵ Odysseus’ very persona is synonymous with inconsistency in action, since his course of action always changes according to the circumstances, and as such he was a problematic moral exemplar. Often, Achilles’ frankness and simplicity of speech and motive served as a positively construed contrast to Odysseus’ apparent duplicity.⁴⁶ Stanford, in *The Ulysses Theme*, illustrates this negative view of Odysseus, citing Solon (ca. 635–558BCE), who sees Odysseus no better than an ever-changing polyp.⁴⁷ In another place, however, the philosopher Antisthenes (ca. 445–ca. 365BCE) defends Odysseus, saying that the term πολύτροπος referred not to his ethics, but merely that he adapted his speech to every audience.⁴⁸ “No reasonable moralist,” Stanford notes, “much less a sophist, could find fault with versatility of that kind.”⁴⁹ Understandably, any person (friend, teacher, or speaker) who imitated Odysseus, always adapting to a variety of situations and even acting in seemingly contradictory ways, risked exposing himself to criticism of inconstancy of character.⁵⁰

Philo of Alexandria (20BCE–50CE) describes well how someone might demonstrate consistency of character and aim amid ever-changing behavior. He does so in his discussion of Joseph—the Jewish counterpart, as it were, to the Greek Odysseus. Like Odysseus, Joseph travels through the world and makes a success of himself wherever he happens to land, whether by Providence or his own machinations (Gen. 37:3; 39:2–6, 23; 41:39–41), and so proves himself to be as variable and capable as Odysseus. Philo even refers to Joseph’s political life (symbolized by his coat of many colors) as ποικίλον. . . και πολύτροπον, terms

at the apostolic goal (σκοπός), countless absurdities (ἄτοποι) will follow” (*Hom. Rom.* 13.1 [PG 60.508]); translated in Mitchell, “‘A Variable and Many-Sorted Man,’” 99.

45 See an expanded discussion of Odysseus’ contested character in William Bedell Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero* (2nd ed.; Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1968); cf. Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*, 1, 19–23. See also Mitchell’s discussion of the charge of inconsistency leveled at the apostle Paul, and how John Chrysostom especially defends Paul against such an accusation (Mitchell, “‘A Variable and Many-Sorted Man.’”).

46 Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*, 19.

47 *Ulysses Theme*, 91, citing *Elegies*, 213–218.

48 Antisthenes, fr. 51.

49 *Ulysses Theme*, 99.

50 Cicero, for example, warns against friendship with one who appears to have a fickle mind, ever-changing and always responding to circumstances (*Amic.* 25).

typically associated with Odysseus.⁵¹ Despite the negative characterization Philo gives Joseph's changeability elsewhere,⁵² in *Joseph* he praises the skill of Joseph's political maneuvering as governed by a singular aim:

The pilot is helped to a successful voyage by means that change with the changes of the wind, and does not confine his guidance of the ship to one method. The physician does not use a single form of treatment for all his patients, nor even for an individual if the physical condition does not remain unaltered, but he watches the lowering and the heightening of the strain, its alterations of fullness and emptiness and all the changes of symptoms, and varies his salutary processes, sometimes using one kind and sometimes another.⁵³

Only a teacher with a character fixed on virtue, resolutely aiming to improve the lives of others, could manage the complexity of adapting his actions while maintaining integrity.⁵⁴ Changes in *conduct* do not necessitate changes in *character*. As Margaret Mitchell says when discussing the apostle Paul's variability, the ideal guide acted in ways neither "contradictory or hypocritical, admitting 'difference' but not 'disparity.'" ⁵⁵ Paul's own actions were governed by a singleness of focus: "that I might win some" (1 Cor. 9:22). Other moralists called this type of motivation *φιλανθρωπία*, or benevolence, that gave their multiplicity a deeper sense of consistency in their genuine concern for wellbeing of others.⁵⁶ An adaptable teacher who changes his behavior as the circumstances require nevertheless guides his behavior by resolving to do what most benefits the other.⁵⁷ Such consistency of character would moreover establish the instruc-

51 Philo, *Jos.* 32.

52 Cf. *De Somn.* 1.219; 2.10–16; *Conf.* 71.

53 *Jos.* 33.

54 Maximus of Tyre: "You must believe that the beauty of philosophical teaching is not multiple or diverse either, but single and coherent. The performers themselves are sent on to the stage of life dressed in the different costumes that Fortune assigns them: Pythagoras in purple, Socrates in his threadbare cloak, Xenophon with breastplate and shield..." (*Or.* 1.10 [Trapp]).

55 Mitchell, "'A Variable and Many-Sorted Man,'" 100–101.

56 See Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 77/78.39; Maximus of Tyre, *Or.* 14.4, 6; Philo, *Abr.* 77–84 (on God's benevolence). See also Abraham J. Malherbe, "Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament," *ANRW* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992), 2.26.1:301–303.

57 See Malherbe, "Hellenistic Moralists," 297.

tor as trustworthy, and such trustworthiness would more effectively persuade students to submit to the teacher's guidance.⁵⁸

The Aims of Adaptability

The aims of adaptability are the aims of all moral formation, and the moral guide, like a pilot or physician, could maintain his constancy amid changing tactics if he focused relentlessly on his aims. By and large, such aims had to do with the attainment of virtue and the avoidance of vice. Yet, like the soul guide himself, the first step to fulfilling these goals was to accrue understanding.

Knowledge of Virtue and the Self

What does the adaptable teacher intend his students to understand? Knowledge of a subject matter plays an important role, but the understanding of the self, as well as virtue and vice takes greater precedence.⁵⁹ As noted earlier, the teacher needs to cross-examine himself before attempting to guide others.⁶⁰ Moral philosophers like Epictetus and Dio Chrysostom expressed this concern for rigorous self-examination to such persons who themselves desired to pursue philosophy.⁶¹ Thus, part of the knowledge imparted by the adaptable teacher is the understanding of the self, as Julian writes to prospective Cynic philosophers:

He who is entering the career of a Cynic ought first to censure severely and cross-examine himself, and without any self-flattery ask himself the following questions in precise terms: whether he enjoys expensive food; whether he cannot do without a soft bed; whether he is the slave of rewards and the opinions of men; whether it is his ambition to attract public notice and even though that be an empty honour he still thinks it worth while Therefore let him who wishes to be a Cynic not adopt merely their long cloak or wallet or staff or their way of wearing the hair, . . . but let him consider that reason rather than a staff and

58 Cf. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 1.2.4: moral character, when shown as trustworthy, most effectively leads to persuasion.

59 Clement, *Paed.* 1.1.1.4–2.1, stresses that the Logos is foremost παιδαγωγός rather than διδάσκαλος, since “his aim is to improve the soul, not to teach it, and to introduce it to the life of moderation, not the life of knowledge.” Exploring the sublimities of divine truth can only come once one’s character has been reformed and healed.

60 Cf. the earlier discussion on p. 19 above.

61 See Epictetus, *Diatr.* 3.22.38–49; Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 49.8–11.

certain plan of life rather than a wallet are the mintmarks of the Cynic philosophy.⁶²

Thus the psychagogue aims to instill within the student the same sort of knowledge the guide himself possesses, i.e., knowledge of the self.

Virtue

In addition to knowledge of themselves, students develop greater knowledge of and familiarity with virtue, leading to the ever greater possession of virtue.⁶³ For all moral guides, “virtue” constituted that which was good, honorable, and praiseworthy, although debates occurred regarding what counted as “virtuous.”⁶⁴ Among ancient moralists, however, possessing knowledge of virtue without practicing virtue was a vain endeavor. Indeed, in Plato’s *Protagoras*, Socrates maintains that while virtue is knowledge, this knowledge cannot be confined to the cognitive sphere.⁶⁵ This is precisely where the psychagogue and the sophist part ways: a sophist may speak of virtue, but if it does not lead to the practice thereof, then virtue has not been taught. Virtue is knowledge insofar as it leads to its expression in word and deed. Conversely (though in agreement with Socrates’ view in the *Protagoras*), Aristotle argues that actions are only virtuous when funded by knowledge of virtue, i.e., when a virtuous deed is done for the sake of virtue.⁶⁶ Elsewhere, Aristotle would refer to this as *φρόνησις*, or “practical wisdom.”⁶⁷ This would lead, as Epictetus writes, to one “not in word, but in deed . . . performing the acts of a wise and good man.”⁶⁸

62 *Oration* 6.200C–201C; translated in Malherbe, *Moral Exhortation*, 35.

63 Cf. Maximus of Tyre, who, in *Or.* 38.6, discusses how God led Odysseus through his many trials primarily as a means for strengthening Odysseus’ virtue.

64 Compare Plato, *Rep.* 4.433a–e and Aristotle, *NE*, books III–VI, where one finds diverging (though not utterly incommensurate) views of what virtue entails.

65 *Prot.* 361a–d.

66 *NE* 1105a: “Works of art have their merit in themselves, so that it is enough if they are produced having a certain quality of their own; but acts done in conformity with the virtues are not done justly or temperately if they themselves are of a certain sort, but only if the agent also is in a certain state of mind when he does them: first he must act with knowledge; secondly he must deliberately choose the act, and choose it for its own sake; and thirdly the act must spring from a fixed and permanent disposition of character” (Rackham).

67 *NE* 1142a.

68 *Diatr.* 3.24.119–120.

There remains, of course, an inverse of the attainment of virtue (no matter how an author defined “virtue”): the removal of vice. In other words, there was as much concern for what to avoid as there was for what to pursue. One of the repeated themes of Philodemus’ treatise *On Frank Criticism* is the necessity for the teacher to speak candidly to anyone who has erred, lest the error go on unchecked.⁶⁹ In the same way, Plutarch stresses that a true friend, in contrast to the flatterer and obsequious person, will always seek not only to offer praise but will also reprove his friend when the situation requires.⁷⁰ Dio Chrysostom stresses likewise that

far worse than a corrupt and diseased body is a soul which is corrupt, not, I swear, because of salves or potions or some consuming poison, but rather because of ignorance and depravity and insolence, yes, and jealousy and grief and unnumbered desires. . . . [T]o this healing and release one must summon without demur father or son, kinsman or outsider, citizen or alien.⁷¹

The adaptable teacher, then, aims equally to strengthen the student in virtue as to diminish the influence of vice.⁷²

Salvation

Some writers on adaptability (and moral formation generally) had more specific goals in mind than simply cultivating virtue and removing vice. Such writers believed that salvation (of some sort) waited in store for those who progressed in knowledge and virtue to the end. This impulse appears frequently in the writings of Philo of Alexandria, as well as in the works of many early Christian authors.⁷³ For Philo, God accommodated primarily through the activity of the Logos in order to lead the virtuous soul to its intended end, the

69 See, for example, fr. 10, 63–67. As I will discuss later, however, adaptability requires a flexibility in the application of such frankness; pp. 39–40.

70 *Adul. amic.* 70B–74E. In 74DE, Plutarch notes the need for a friend’s reproof to imitate the skillful surgeon who, after making an incision, quickly applies a balm to soothe the pain.

71 *Or.* 77/78.45.

72 By and large, adaptable teachers held to a mediating view of the possibility for human potential: neither pessimistically resigning themselves to human frailty and vice, nor subscribing to an exceedingly optimistic notion that all people desire to pursue virtue. For example, in *Moral Exhortation*, Malherbe offers Ps.-Diogenes and Musonius Rufus as exemplars of these two poles among moral philosophers (41–42, 46–47).

73 Many of whom were undoubtedly influenced by Philo’s works. See David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (CRINT 3; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993).

contemplation of God's essence, or the *visio Dei*.⁷⁴ Clement of Alexandria, utilizing language likely influenced by Philo, writes:

The education that God gives is the imparting of the truth that will guide us correctly to the contemplation of God. . . . Just as the general directs a line of battle with the safety of his soldiers in mind, and as the helmsman pilots his ship conscious of his responsibility for the lives of his passengers, so the Educator, in his concern for us, leads His children along a way of life that ensures salvation.⁷⁵

For Philo and early Christians in particular, psychagogical adaptability had no lesser goal than the eternal salvation of the student's soul. Similarly, in the view of Clement of Alexandria, the Word of God accommodates to humanity not just to inspire faith, but also to reveal how humanity might attain divinity.⁷⁶ To be sure, this involves virtue, but virtue (even broadly understood) does not exhaust the notion of salvation in Philo and Clement, as well as others like them.

On the whole, one might realistically consider the character of the adaptable guide and such a guide's aims as two sides of the same coin, since the aims arise out of the beneficent and knowledgeable character of the teacher. Both the aims and the character remain steadfast and constant, altering (ideally) only with respect to maturity. These presuppositions of adaptable psychagogy deflect criticisms of inconsistency on the part of the teacher (criticisms which often came from other moral guides), but they also provide the instructor with a moral compass for navigating the ever-changing circumstances that arise in human life, as well as in the midst of students' evolving needs.

Practices of Adaptability

The contrast between the *presuppositions* of adaptability and its *practices* could not look more dissimilar: the former has to do with notions of fixity and

74 One of the better treatments of mystical soteriology in Philo coupled with a notion of divine psychagogy is David Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1985).

75 *Paed.* 1.7.54.2 (Wood, FC).

76 *Prot.* 1.8.4: ὁ λόγος ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀνθρωπος γενόμενος, ἵνα δὴ καὶ σὺ παρὰ ἀνθρώπου μάθῃς, πῇ ποτε ἄρα ἀνθρωπος γένηται θεός.

singularity, while the latter seems protean and takes myriad forms.⁷⁷ In psychagogical adaptability, however, the need for a diverse set of tactics in guiding others along indicates the recognition that, since students start from a unique place and possesses their own strengths and weaknesses, each will necessarily take a different route to arrive at the common goal. While the specific means for instruction are widespread and manifold, those speaking about psychagogical adaptability tend to focus on three key areas: accommodation, variation, and progression. These three areas of consideration fall under a fourth, larger category, one that, together with the character and aims of adaptability, provides a framework in which the teacher can act: expediency.

The Principle of Expedience

Expediency—οἰκονομία or *dispositio*—served as the baseline for any adaptable behavior, whether in education, rhetoric, politics, or friendship. The basic concern of expedience had to do with discerning the most effective and practical course of action one could take to achieve one's goals.⁷⁸ Quintilian (ca. 35CE–ca. 100) devoted an entire book of his *Institutio Oratoria* (Book 7) to *dispositio*, or the best possible arrangement of an argument. He notes in his preface:

The whole of this book . . . will be devoted to arrangement (*dispositio*),⁷⁹ an art the acquisition of which would never have been such a rarity, had it been possible to lay down general rules which would suit all subjects. But since cases in the courts have always presented an infinite variety, and will continue to do so, and since through all the centuries there has never been found one single case which was exactly like any other, the pleader

77 Cf. Maximus of Tyre, *Or. 1.1. Glad* (*Paul and Philodemus*, 19–22), in talking about Odysseus's reputation as *homo duplex* over against Achilles' *homo simplex* type, makes the following point: "The psychagogue must be honest like the *homo simplex* character type, but adapt in word and deed like the *homo duplex* type in order to be the most effective" (22).

78 For a broader discussion of "expediency" in pre-Christian thought, see John Reumann, "Οἰκονομία as 'Ethical Accommodation' in the Fathers, and its Pagan Backgrounds," in *Texte Und Untersuchungen* 78 (ed. F.L. Cross; StPatr 3; Berlin: Akademie, 1961), 370–379. One interesting rhetorical ploy he notes regarding pre-Christian notions of οἰκονομία (375) is the rearrangement of the τάξις, or chronological order of events, to create a more persuasive ordering of events.

79 The Loeb editors note that many MSS have "divisioni," but even allowing this change does not alter the significance of this passage for this discussion.

must rely upon his sagacity, keep his eyes open, exercise his powers of invention and judgment and look to himself for advice.⁸⁰

Such a mindset should also apply to the adaptable pedagogue: no handbook can provide adequate rules for the myriad variations of students that a teacher might be called upon to guide, but general guidelines of expediency and appropriateness can serve as aids. Philo ascribes Jacob's "deception" of Isaac (Gen. 27) to the expediency befitting a wise man, noting that various circumstances required him to "conceal virtue and make it hairy because of the necessity of the occasion, and [to use] economy. . . ."⁸¹

Importantly, early Christian interpreters (as well as Philo) often attributed *οἰκονομία* as a guiding principle for God's activity toward humanity, and could in turn be adopted by human psychagogues.⁸² The term *οἰκονομία*—difficult to translate, with common options being "economical behavior," "arrangement," or "plan"—typically refers to biblical events that, on the surface, embarrassed the theological sensitivities of early Christian writers.⁸³ Nevertheless, the term conveys the notion of adaptability well, since it involves subordinating one's actions to one's overall goals: in the case of divine adaptability, doing things that appear beneath the dignity of the divine in order to save, even engaging in what might otherwise be considered "trickery."

Initiating the Journey

Persuasion

The journey toward knowledge, virtue, and indeed salvation must begin with persuasion, because moral guidance and the cultivation of virtue cannot take place apart from some degree of willingness on the part of the student.⁸⁴ As with the physician, the educator convinces all students to undergo a particular treatment in order to heal them—a stubborn student can no more benefit from philosophy than a patient who resists the doctor's therapies. Clement of

80 *Inst.* pr.4 (Butler, LCL). Dionysius of Halicarnassus employs similar logic in discussing Thucydides' writing style in *On Thucydides* 9, in which he refers to the historian's *οἰκονομία*, a desirable trait, he asserts, for any sort of writing.

81 *QG* 4.204 (Marcus, LCL); cf. 4.206.

82 See Joseph W. Trigg, "God's Marvelous Oikonomia: Reflections of Origen's Understanding of Divine and Human Pedagogy in the Address Ascribed to Gregory Thaumaturgus," *JECs* 9 (2001): 27–52.

83 Reumann, "Οἰκονομία," 370–71.

84 In *Phaedr.* 260a–d, however, Socrates stresses the importance of knowledge on the part of the instructor, lest willing students be led astray by the teacher's ignorance of truth into the mere *appearance* of truth.

Alexandria, in *Christ the Pedagogue*, refers to persuasion as one of the key functions of the Divine Word, and Clement devotes an entire work to persuading educated Greeks to heed the call of Christ, his *Protrepticus* (or *Exhortation to the Greeks*).⁸⁵ Persuasive appeal arises naturally out of the guide's understanding of the dispositions of human souls, and adapts the language of the invitation to each ear. Yet such persuasion differs from that of "sophists," whom many ancient authors decry as those who might argue that black was white for the right price.⁸⁶

Provocation and Invitation

Persuasion provides only the barest of goals for the adaptable guide. Once a student submits to the educator's guidance, the instructor attempts to provoke, invite, and draw the student into a pursuit of truth and virtue. Now the aim is not only to heal the student, but also to say to the student: "heal thyself."⁸⁷ In the rhetorical handbook *On Style* (ca. first century BCE), the author Demetrius cites Theophrastus (c. 371–c. 287BCE) and the ways in which he craftily instructs his students in order to spur them on to further learning:

Everything should not be elaborated in detail, but some things should be left for the hearer to know and to reason out by himself; for recognizing what has been left out, he becomes not only your hearer but your "witness," and a very friendly one too. For he thinks himself intelligent since you have furnished him a starting point of understanding, while to tell him everything as though he were ignorant makes you appear to feel contempt for the hearer.⁸⁸

Like a good modern mystery novel, the adaptable teacher withholds key information from students, which has the effect of equipping them to become

85 *Paed.* 1.1.3–4. Indeed, in the *Protrepticus* Clement expresses his understanding of the ways the Word has already employed to call and persuade the Gentiles to accept his salvation, especially by means of philosophy.

86 Examples of critiques of this form of persuasion, motivated by selfish gain rather than beneficence, can be found in Isocrates, *Against the Sophists*, and Plato, *Gorgias*.

87 While this phrase comes from Jesus (Luke 4:23), the concept appears centuries earlier in Aesop's fable, "The Quack Frog," short enough to retell here: "A Frog once upon a time came forth from his home in the marsh and proclaimed to all the beasts that he was a learned physician, skilled in the use of drugs and able to heal all diseases. A Fox asked him, 'How can you pretend to prescribe for others, when you are unable to heal your own lame gait and wrinkled skin?'"

88 Translated in Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric*, 85.

αὐτομαθής, self-taught.⁸⁹ Clement of Alexandria, in his discussion of the various senses of scripture, refers also to this method: the divine instructor sometimes speaks obscurely in order that “we might be more inquisitive” (ἵνα ζητητικοὶ ὑπάρχωμεν).⁹⁰ Such learners, then, quickly seek out deeper and broader understanding, joining the teacher as fellow pursuers of understanding.

Accommodating the Form of Communication

Speaking the Students' Language

Expediency also plays a major role in discerning what actions, words, and even concessions would be most suitable to one's students. Cicero writes on the need for such accommodation in public speaking, saying, “For this oratory of ours must be adapted (*accommodanda*) to the ears of the multitude, for charming or urging their minds to approve of proposals, which are weighed in no goldsmith's balance, but in what I may call common scales.”⁹¹ Rhetoricians had, of course, understood this fact for centuries. The application of accommodating language, however, evolves significantly when Origen applies it to divine discourse with and instruction of humanity:

God condescends and lowers himself (συμπεριηνέγχθη καὶ συγκατέβη), accommodating himself (οὐκ εἰσούμενος) to our weakness, like a teacher speaking a “little language” to his children, like a father caring for his own children and adopting their ways, and little by little leading (κατὰ μικρὸν ἄγων) them into greater perfection and sublimity.⁹²

89 This term appears frequently in Philo, and often refers to a special class of the virtuous who learned virtue apart from a mortal guide. Among them number in particular the Patriarchs, Moses, and Melchizedek; *Sacr.* 6; *Post.* 78; *Deus* 4; *Fug.* 170; *Det.* 30; *Congr.* 99.

90 *Strom.* 6.15.126. This was a common theme in Alexandrian exegesis, shared not only by Clement and Origen, but also the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Preaching of Peter* (Ronald E. Heine, *Origen: Scholarship in the Service of the Church* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], 133).

91 *De or.* 2.159 (Sutton and Rackham, LCL).

92 *Frag. on Deut.* 1.21 from Catena, PG 17.24; translated in R.P.C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture; Introduction by Joseph W. Trigg* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 226. John Chrysostom (in *Hom. Jo.* 13) expands upon Origen's idea, referring to the coming of John the Baptist as having the purpose of speaking in a way that people would receive it, rather than as coming first from one claiming to be God's Son.

The adaptable teacher, then, must discern what level of language to utilize with his charges, finding the best possible words to persuade and to guide them to the goal.⁹³

Allowing for Concessions

Even as a teacher needed to speak at the level of his students, he would occasionally find himself having to make temporary concessions, allowing students to believe certain things as true for a time. Such concessions could, of course, later become stumbling blocks to further development, but conceding such points also proved invaluable for allowing students to grasp what they could at a particular time. Philo frequently speaks of God making such concessions, such as when he allowed humanity to give a name to God's unspeakable essence.⁹⁴ Among a number of early Christian authors, the notion that God temporarily allowed false practices and beliefs led many to consider many of the ritual and dietary commands of the Old Testament as requirements not placed upon the more "advanced" Christian.⁹⁵ In so doing, however, Philo and many early Christians stood well within their broader culture, in which men like Maximus of Tyre made similar claims regarding God's accommodation to humanity:

[D]ivinity in its own nature has no need of statues and dedications; but humanity, an utterly feeble species that lies as far from the divine as heaven from earth, contrived them as symbols through which to preserve the gods' names and their reputations. People whose memories are strong, and who can reach straight out for the heavens with their souls and encounter the divine, may perhaps have no need of images. But this is a category ill-represented among men, and once could not hope ever to

93 While its dating remains elusive, *Pesiqta deRab Kahana* 12.24 affirms this concept, as the author makes mention of God speaking to the enslaved Israelites in Egyptian (in part), since they had not yet been fully delivered (although the *argument* about God speaking in Egyptian, based on a faulty etymology of the Hebrew עִיפְיָא, is itself rather spurious).

94 See *Mut.* 11–15; *Leg.* 3.142; *Migr.* 14, 131; *Mos.* 2.25–44. While not entirely consistent on this point, Philo occasionally asserts that the only proper title humanity can give to the highest being is ὁ ὢν, "the Existent One" (e.g., *Somn.* 1.229–232). Cf. Tzvi Novick, "Perspective, Paideia, and Accommodation in Philo," *SPhilo* 21 (2009): 49–62.

95 This is one of the themes of Stephen D. Benin's survey of adaptability in Christianity (and Judaism) from the 2nd century CE through the mid-16th century, *The Footprints of God*. He frequently focuses on the "negative" side of adaptability in Christianity, particularly as it appeared in (and underwrote) anti-Jewish rhetoric.

encounter a whole people mindful of the divine as to dispense with that kind of assistance.⁹⁶

Some moralists, however, saw the use of concessions as corrupt. For them, such concessions amounted to deceit. Yet the psychagogue, drawing on the image of the physician, could employ without moral inhibition the “medicinal lie,” in which a doctor would deceive a patient to gain his or her compliance.⁹⁷ Clement defends Paul’s consistency on just this point, saying that Paul circumcised Timothy to placate Jewish Christians, all the while affirming the inefficacy of circumcision for the righteousness of Gentiles.⁹⁸ John Chrysostom, in *On the Priesthood*, makes good use out of such noble deception, utilizing it to ensure that his friend Basil undergoes ordination to the priesthood (for which John considered his friend more worthy than himself).⁹⁹ Motivated by a consistent aim of benefitting the other, an adaptable teacher employs truth and falsehood alike, utilizing whatever he needs at a particular moment to aid the student.

Providing a Model for Imitation

Abstract guidance in virtue only benefits a student so much, though, and the wisest guides realized that their own lives could provide students with examples of virtuous living. In this vein, Epictetus tells the person desiring to exhort others in philosophy that first such a person must exemplify the philosophical life:

Do you wish to help them? Then show them, by your own example, the kind of men philosophy produces, and stop talking nonsense. As you eat, help those who are eating with you; as you drink, those who are drinking with you; by yielding to everybody, giving place, submitting—help men in this way, and don’t bespatter them with your own sputum.¹⁰⁰

Yet guides themselves often relied upon heavenly examples in living out virtue. For instance, Clement of Alexandria points to Christ as one who “showed not

96 *Or.* 2.2 (Trapp). In this citation, one can see rather sharply Maximus of Tyre’s Middle Platonism shining through in his affirmation of the pre-existence of the soul.

97 See Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme*, 20–21.

98 *Strom.* 7.9.53. This example appears also in Tertullian, *Marc.* 5.3, in which Tertullian (like Origen) attempts to show Paul’s consistency despite the variation between word and deed.

99 John Chrysostom, *Sac.*, esp. book 1.

100 *Diatr.* 3.13.22–23; translated in Glad, “Paul and Adaptability,” 25.

only the theory but also the practice of virtue,”¹⁰¹ and Maximus of Tyre writes that people become like Zeus and inhabit virtue when they imitate his desire to save, his affection, and his paternal care.¹⁰²

Employing Corporeal Signs

Offering themselves as models for right action leads to another important tool for the adaptable guide, i.e., corporeal signs. The weakness of humanity, Maximus of Tyre writes, requires God to utilize sounds, visions, and creatures to enable humanity to recognize even the bare fact of God’s existence.¹⁰³ John Chrysostom makes a similar claim, suggesting that the imperceptible God is made manifest even to the cherubim (Isa. 6) and humanity, not because God possesses a visible form, but as an act of adaptability (συγκατάβασις) because God chooses to provide them with a means by which creatures might perceive God’s essence.¹⁰⁴ Signs need not take concrete form either. Clement of Alexandria recognizes that Jesus’ parables in the Gospels are themselves signs that help instruct humanity.¹⁰⁵ An adaptable teacher recognizes, then, that people require concrete examples as starting points, and so such a guide offers perceptible signs—whether in word, deed, or in his very life—that enable students to grasp the higher truths beyond those signs.¹⁰⁶

Variation

Different Approaches for Different Persons

Accommodation in word and deed tended to take place with respect to an educator’s students as a group (as can be seen most clearly in rhetorical accommodation). Adaptable psychagogy, however, required the teacher also to consider the individual needs of each student. That is, the adaptable teacher treated different students differently. So, for example, Philodemus encourages teachers

¹⁰¹ *Paed.* 1.3.9.4.

¹⁰² *Or.* 35.2.

¹⁰³ *Or.* 2.2 (Trapp 23).

¹⁰⁴ *Anom.* 3.15. The term συγκατάβασις has been rendered a number of ways: most woodenly it is translated “condescension”; others have chosen “considerateness”; but, as Rylaarsdam notes, “adaptability” communicates the concept most accurately (Rylaarsdam, “The Adaptability of Divine Pedagogy,” 19.).

¹⁰⁵ *Paed.* 1.8.66.5. John Chrysostom, for one, sees the entirety of Christ’s earthly ministry as one long succession of signs—which he calls σημεία, perhaps drawing on the vocabulary of the Fourth Gospel, (Rylaarsdam, “The Adaptability of Divine Pedagogy,” 234, 237–38).

¹⁰⁶ Rylaarsdam, “The Adaptability of Divine Pedagogy,” 119, phrases this point well: “Through many different symbols, God leads finite, earthly humanity from physically perceptible things to spiritual realities. God makes tangible what is otherwise intangible to weak humanity.”

to speak differently to the person of humble means than to the person whose family possesses great wealth.¹⁰⁷ This necessity for accommodation extends to each student's personality traits, particular virtues and vices, status, gender, age, and so on.¹⁰⁸ Philodemus recognized that students of stronger dispositions could handle greater candor, whereas weaker students needed a gentler touch.¹⁰⁹ Such variability also appears in Paul's statement in 1 Cor. 9:19–21, in which he described himself as becoming "all things to all people." Moreover, as discussed above, the adaptable guide knows that different illnesses require different treatments, even as people with the same illness respond to different kinds of treatments.¹¹⁰

Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Ephrem the Syrian (ca. 306–373) all saw this kind of variation at work in the life and ministry of Jesus, the divine Word incarnate. Ephrem, in one of his hymns, poetically describes the way in which Jesus offered to each person precisely whatever he or she needed: "The living Fount [Jesus] lets distinct blessings flow to distinct people."¹¹¹ More concretely, Clement asserted that Jesus healed "in a way suitable to the nature of the soul."¹¹² Origen develops this notion even further when he speaks of how God gave to "the educated [e.g., Moses or the Prophets] a conception of God (θεολογίαν) which could raise their soul from earthly things," yet to those who were weaker Christ came down (συγκαταβαίνοντα) to provide a greater degree of assistance.¹¹³ While clearly of a different degree than the variation employed by mere mortals, the notion that Christ instructed and healed each person by giving due attention to their particular needs arises out of a shared understanding of how an adaptable teacher interacted with students.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁷ *Frank Criticism* Col. ivb, viA.

¹⁰⁸ *Frank Criticism* Col. va–Col. viiia.

¹⁰⁹ *Frank Criticism* fr. 7. See also Plutarch, *On Listening to Lectures* 46C–47E for the varieties of students and how they respond to different kinds of admonitions; also, Quintilian, *Inst.* 2.8.1; 2.2.1–14; 2.3.10; 2.4.8–12.

¹¹⁰ Again, see Seneca, *Ep.* 75 on the necessity for adapting to students of various dispositions. Glad also gives an extended treatment on the subject of ancient views on accommodating to students of various dispositions and constitutions (*Paul and Philodemus*, 75–81).

¹¹¹ Ephrem the Syrian, *Virg.* 23.3 (translated in Kathleen E. McVey, "St. Ephrem's Understanding of Spiritual Progress: Some Points of Comparison with Origen of Alexandria," *The Harp* 1 [1988]: 120). See also John Chrysostom, *Anom.* 9.13. Likewise, see similar sentiments in *Pesiqta deRab Kahana* 12.24–25.

¹¹² *Paed* 1.2.6.4 (Wood, FC).

¹¹³ *Cels.* 7.41 (Chadwick).

¹¹⁴ Origen's understanding of the different senses of scripture also arose out of the awareness that God revealed to each according to ability and need—a view derived in part from

Adapting to Change

A skilled psychagogue knew also that with individual students changes in the environment often required adjusting one's dealing with them. As the rhetorician aimed to speak at the proper time (καιρός), so too must the moral guide. Plutarch provides numerous examples of how a friend might offer a helpful rebuke in a wide variety of circumstances, particularly as the mood and emotions of the person needing rebuke change.¹¹⁵ Maximus of Tyre praises Reason (ὁ Λόγος) for its ability to govern life precisely because it possesses such adaptability in every season:

Set over life, however, is Reason, which constantly adapts itself (σχηματιζόμενος) to the circumstances of the moment, like a skilled doctor whose duty is to regulate the indigence and satiety of a body that is not stable, but surges back and forth, in the turmoil of evacuation and repletion. This is precisely what the rational teaching of philosophers can do for human life, adapting its tone to suit the emotions of the moment, so as both to offer consolation in sad times and to enhance the celebrations in times of joy.¹¹⁶

Reason, the basis of the instruction of philosophers, provided itself as an example of the adaptability needed to guide others toward virtue amid a variety of conditions.¹¹⁷

Gentle and Harsh Instruction

One of the most distinguishing traits found in adaptable psychagogy comes under the title of the “mixed method” (μεικτὸς τρόπος, appearing in Philodemus’ [ca. 110–40/35BCE] *On Frank Criticism*),¹¹⁸ an approach characterized by the alternating use of praise and blame. In the quote from Dio Chrysostom at the beginning of this chapter he utilized a line from the *Iliad*, “with gentle words

the allegorical approach of Philo. See Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature*, 157–83; Hanson, *Allegory and Event*, 221.

115 *Adul. amic.* 70c–f.

116 *Or.* 1.2 (Trapp).

117 In a similar vein, Origen notes the many titles of Jesus in the Gospel of John, and connects these many titles to the wide-ranging needs of humanity. In *Comm. Jo.* 1.119, he writes that Christ “would not have become the light of men if men had not been in darkness . . . We must also consider whether he would not have become a shepherd if man had not been compared ‘to senseless beasts nor become like them.’”

118 *On Frank Criticism*, fr. 58.7–8. Glad gives a much fuller account of the mixed method than space affords here (*Paul and Philodemus*, 71–89).

at times, at others harsh,”¹¹⁹ a phrase that adequately summarizes the mixed method. Adaptable psychagogy utilized whatever tools were at the teacher’s disposal, including the appeal to students’ desire to receive praise and avoid censure. Clement of Alexandria goes beyond simple praise and censure in characterizing the instructional method of the Logos:

Truly, the Educator of mankind, the divine Word of ours, has devoted Himself with all His strength to save his little ones by all the means at the disposal of His wisdom: warning, blaming, rebuking, correcting, threatening, healing, promising, bestowing favors—in a word, ‘binding as if with many bits’ [Plato, *Laws* 7.808d] the unreasonable impulses of human nature.¹²⁰

Plutarch writes that reprimand with a touch of praise mixed in leads to lasting results, and does not too greatly inflame the one receiving admonition.¹²¹ Seneca recognizes that too much praise or too much blame result in an unhealthy balance of character, leading to either arrogance or servility. Instead, “we must guide the child between the two extremes, using now the curb, now the spur.”¹²² Alternating praise and blame—as the situation and individual needs of the student required—allowed the educator to navigate between the Scylla and the Charybdis, avoiding the errors of choosing exclusively one or the other.

Like the skilled physician or helmsman, the adaptable guide recognized the need for amending his behavior toward each student according to a number of concerns: the particular dispositions and backgrounds of the students, the circumstances in place at any given time, and the balance between honor and rebuke. Because these concerns ranged widely and demanded responses of equally broad range, the variation in the instructor’s actions could understandably resemble the protean character of the charlatan or flatterer. Nevertheless, as noted above, the single concern to guide each student toward virtue (and, for some, salvation) helped ensure that variation did not devolve into inconsistency.

119 Homer, *Iliad* 12.267. The context refers to the attempts of the two Ajaxes to fortify their fellow soldiers as they defended their camp against a Trojan attack.

120 *Paed.* 1.9.75.1. Clement makes similar claims several other times in, e.g., *Paed.* 3.3, 8; 43.2; 74.2–3; 83.2.

121 *Adul. amic.* 72B–D.

122 *Ira*, 2.21.3 (Basore, LCL).

Progression

Ideally, students would change and grow in their search for truth and their capacity for virtue. Such changes necessarily altered the psychic landscape, demanding the educator's constant attention to the evolving needs of both the individual and the group. Thus, the adaptable teacher would recognize that even as different students called for different treatment, so too did the altered makeup of the student require an altered approach from the guide. The metaphor of the boat's pilot makes this point clear: successfully navigating around dangers near the shore in no way nullifies the need for attentive maneuvering on the open sea.

The Appropriate "Curriculum"

Skillful pedagogy over time, like skilled navigation, arises from an understanding of the course of progression. Clement of Alexandria points out not only the importance of accommodating to individual students, but also stresses the need to teach things in their proper order—the moral/spiritual equivalent of requiring mastery of the *enkyklios paideia* (the curriculum of general education in the Greco-Roman world) before allowing students to study rhetoric or philosophy.¹²³ (Aelius Theon, for one, in his *Progymnasmata* recommended starting with the simple, and moving gradually to the more complex tasks of declamation.¹²⁴) This progressive education flows out of the teacher's imitation of the master Pedagogue: "Therefore, the all-loving Word, anxious to perfect in us a way that leads progressively to salvation, makes effective use of an order well adapted (τῇ καλῇ συγχρηταί οἰκονμίᾳ) for our instruction; at first, He persuades, then He educates, and after all this He teaches."¹²⁵ The transformation from earthly soul to one of virtue rarely happens in an instant. In *On Frank Criticism*, though, Philodemus points out that some students progress rather steadily, while others advance all of a sudden (and often unexpectedly).¹²⁶

¹²³ Kovacs, "Divine Pedagogy," 7. On p. 8, Kovacs notes how Clement understood the Old Testament and Greek philosophy both as guides leading to higher truth, which found its culmination in Christianity. Origen took a similar approach in his own teaching, as evidenced by a comment he makes regarding the good timing of the Logos in revealing proper things, "so as not to harm the person listening and calibrating carefully what is to be left out and what it to be added" (*Comm. Jo.* 20.1.7 [Heine, FC]).

¹²⁴ *Progymnasmata*, 110, 112.

¹²⁵ *Paed.* 1.1.3.3 (Wood, FC).

¹²⁶ *On Frank Criticism*, fr. 32, 33. In fr. 58–59, Philodemus also indicates the likelihood that some students might *regress*, and "shun even philosophy" (fr. 59), due to a number of causes (e.g., suffering from a weakness of spirit, or succumbing to the destructive teaching of another guide).

The realization of this fact arises from the idea that different students possess different dispositions and inclinations. Naturally, then, students would advance at their own rate. The adaptable teacher, then, attends to the progression of each, and utilizes skill in guiding each one's progress from stage to stage. Moreover, as the student's capacity for understanding increases, the instructor's methods must change accordingly.

Such progression in understanding undergirds Philo's understanding of the many emanations of God's essence. In allegorizing the account of the cities of refuge in Num. 35, Philo describes the cities along a scale, which serve as way-points, as it were, in the pursuit of divine Wisdom, the Logos.¹²⁷ Certain souls, more inclined to virtue, may proceed directly to the greatest city of refuge, the Word itself. Others, however, require the aid of lesser divine emanations, such as God's retributive, merciful, or kingly powers. Elsewhere, Philo writes that, for the souls of those who love God, the Word "teaches very fully, leading us on by degrees (κατ' ὀλίγον ἐπάγων ἐκδιδάσκει), using the ordinary arts as the means of instruction."¹²⁸ God, the consummate adaptable teacher provides students with a means to progress from things of the sense-perceptible world to the things of the ideal, acting out of God's great φιλανθρωπία.¹²⁹

Repetition and Teaching by Degree

At times in a student's development, however, the adaptable guide may run up against some resistance, and so a student may need to bear the same lesson repeatedly for the lesson to take hold.¹³⁰ Similarly, adaptable pedagogy must teach "by degrees" (κατ' ὀλίγον) or, as in Origen and John Chrysostom, "little by little" (κατὰ μικρόν).¹³¹ The same point may need pressing repeatedly, with the student grasping more and more with each iteration.

Some things remain beyond the ken of the neophyte, only understandable to the advanced student. One technique employed, then, is to utilize a

¹²⁷ *Fug.* 96–99.

¹²⁸ *Post.* 130 (Colson, LCL).

¹²⁹ This notion in Philo is taken up in early Christianity, and the role of the divine pedagogue (occasionally taken by the Philonic Logos, but more often played by God) becomes almost entirely dominated by notions of the Christian Logos as the educator of humanity.

¹³⁰ See, for example, Philodemus, *On Frank Criticism* fr. 64, 65, on the need for repetition in formation.

¹³¹ While not an example of an adaptable guide *per se*, Dio Chrysostom refers (in *Or.* 3.78–81) to the goodness of the sun's governance, in which neither cold nor heat, light nor darkness comes all of a sudden, but comes by degrees, such as the transition between winter and summer or day and night. Such slow variation ensures the health and welfare of the world under the sun's care, and even strengthens all creation to such variations.

mundane image to draw the student's gaze up toward the sublime. For Origen, this is why God speaks first in terms of simple and easily perceived things. On the foundation of such things, God teaches people, "little by little leading them to the most perfect and sublime things."¹³² The need for progression ultimately provides the rationale by which the adaptable teacher allows for any concessions. Earlier I noted how Maximus of Tyre believed God allowed images, even though God cannot be contained by form. Continuing, he offers God's rationale for this:

Just as primary teachers contrive to help their pupils by sketching faint letters for them, over which they can guide the movements of their hands, as reminders to help them to familiarity with the skill of writing, in the same way it seems to me that legislators invented their own kind of images for men, as if for a class of children: as symbols of the honor paid to the gods and as a kind of pathway to recollection.¹³³

So, too, did many Christians perceive God's "concessions" in worship granted to the Jewish people as acceptable for a particular time and place, though after the coming of Christ (when humanity was deemed mature enough), they believed these concessions could be set aside.¹³⁴

When talking about an individual's progression rather than a people's, the principle itself remains the same: as a student's understanding of truth and capacity for virtue increase, the student must learn to set aside earlier aids for moral or spiritual development. The student must also, as noted earlier, increasingly learn to be self-taught, and to pursue the truth apart from the assistance of the guide.¹³⁵ Ideally, the adaptable psychagogue not only guides the student from vice to virtue, but also replicates himself, adding to the number of those who are wise and serve as fellow guides to one another.¹³⁶ Even at such a point, however, no person is above the frank rebuke of the wise,

¹³² *Frag. on Deut.*, PG 17.24.

¹³³ *Or. 2.2* (Trapp).

¹³⁴ Again, on this point see Benin, *The Footprints of God*. See also Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 1.37–38.

¹³⁵ Though this would not entirely be the case for many writers in Christianity, who understood the ongoing role of the Spirit and/or the Logos in guiding the student toward perfection.

¹³⁶ Such would certainly have been the case among Epicurean communities, as Glad's overview of Epicurean communal psychagogy would suggest (Glad, *Paul and Philodemus*, 124–32).

and for many moralists, no person ever fully “finishes” the journey toward perfection—not on this side of death, at any rate.¹³⁷

The practices of adaptability, in contrast to the character and aims, vary as widely as the circumstances in which the adaptable teacher finds himself, and vary as widely as the uniqueness of his students. Adaptable pedagogy demands an acknowledgement of the particular language, customs, and degrees of understanding of students. It similarly requires a flexibility to engage with students from a wide range of backgrounds and with extremely diverse personalities. Moreover, the practice of adaptability calls for suppleness, an ability to recognize the proper moment for any and every action. Perhaps most importantly, serving as an adaptable guide requires a commitment over a long period of time, attending to the changing needs of the students as they make progress toward the goal of virtue and salvation.

Summary

Pedagogical adaptability, consequently, encompasses several diverse behaviors and actions on the part of the guide, but remains ever grounded by his unchanging character. The many different tools, methods, and accommodations had as their singular aim the improvement of the student’s knowledge, virtue, and character, leading (in some views) to the student’s attainment of salvation. Ideally, such a student would also then be able to imitate the guide in the fullest sense, by himself taking on an adaptable disposition in order to lead others upward on the path toward virtue.

Among early Christian writers, adaptability began to take on a new aspect as they reflected upon what had taken place in the incarnation of the Word. They saw that, just as human teachers accommodated to their uneducated or undisciplined students, so also did God accommodate to humanity out of concern for their salvation, and acted so as the psychagogue *par excellence*. Clement of Alexandria describes the traits that demonstrate the Logos’ superiority as the educator of humanity, since he possessed “understanding” (ἐπιστήμη), “good will” (εὐνοία), and “frankness of speech” (παρρησία).¹³⁸ In other words, the adaptable guide must not only know what he is doing, but should also have the authority to act and a character consonant with instruction in moral improvement. So, while few human educators could meet the standard of the

¹³⁷ Philodemus, *On Frank Criticism*, fr. 16, 22, 52.

¹³⁸ *Paed.* 1.11.97.3.

divine Logos, their relatively high attainment of virtue was a prerequisite for the role.

Origen and John Chrysostom both attributed the psychagogical adaptability of the Word to divine φιλανθρωπία, or benevolence, particularly in the incarnation.¹³⁹ This willingness to forego one's proper dignity, to be humbled, and to associate with persons from every level of society, showed how great a degree of concern the Word had for human salvation. The incarnation of the Word exemplified such willing humiliation, but further, after having become human, authors remarked on how Jesus frequently humbled himself *even more* to teach his audience. John Chrysostom writes: "[W]henever Christ says something of a lowly nature, what he says is so mean and lowly that the surpassing humility of his words can persuade even those who are extremely obstinate and contentious that the words he speaks fall far short of that sacred and ineffable essence."¹⁴⁰

This view of the divine adaptability in the incarnation appeared not only in abstract reflections on Christology, but also in Christian exegesis. In particular, John's Gospel proved rich for such exegetical reflection on the ways in which the preexistent Word accommodated to humanity, not only as a whole, but also as the Word adapted his guidance to specific individuals. By and large, such interpretation drew attention to the very traits I have described here.

As I turn to the portrayal of Jesus' character in the Fourth Gospel, then, the outline above will help to identify if and when the Evangelist draws upon the adaptability *topos*. While the Gospel nowhere lays out all of these elements neatly or in the order offered here, the presence of these elements in the Gospel's depiction of Jesus suggests an appearance very much like an adaptable teacher.¹⁴¹ Characterizing Jesus as an adaptable guide reflects on a long, though neglected, tradition of interpretation. This study of adaptability in the Fourth Gospel's picture of Jesus engages with a number

139 See, for example, Origen, *Cels.* 4.15; John Chrysostom, *Laud. Paul.* 5.5; *Anom.* 7.20. Especially among the Alexandrians, Philo's notion of φιλανθρωπία played no small role. Peder Borgen goes so far to say that, above all else, "*Philanthropia* characterizes God's relationship to human beings" (*Philo of Alexandria: An Exegete for His Time* [NovTSup 86; Leiden: Brill, 1997], 245).

140 *Anom.* 7.39 (Harkins, FC).

141 Benin, in *The Footprints of God*, cites a helpful analogy from Henri de Saint-Simon: "In attempting to trace the history of any idea, and especially one which is so pervasive [as adaptability], it would be wise to recall Saint-Simon's observation concerning the penetration of intellectual influences. 'General ideas,' he noted, 'may be compared to musk. One does not have to see it or touch it in order to sense its odor'" (xv; citing *Introduction aux travaux scientifiques du dix-neuvième siècle* [1808], 1.68).

of interpreters who themselves identified adaptability in the words and actions of the Johannine Jesus. In particular, Clement and Origen of Alexandria, Ephrem the Syrian, and John Chrysostom—the so-called “doctor of adaptability”¹⁴²—will serve as helpful exegetical guides in the remainder of this study. In addition, where appropriate, I will call on Philo of Alexandria, whose thought famously shares some important characteristics with that of the Fourth Evangelist. These writers, as evidenced throughout this chapter, each breathed much of the same cultural air as that of the Evangelist, and as such their perspectives will prove invaluable in this attempt to explore the Johannine Jesus in the light of the concept of adaptability.

142 Indeed, in an overview of Greco-Roman notions of adaptability in Christian thought, Pinard calls Chrysostom “le docteur de la condescendance” (Henry Pinard, “Les infiltrations païennes dans l’Ancienne Loi d’après les Pères de l’Elgise. La thèse de la condescendance,” *RSR* 9 [1919]: 209).

Descent and Adaptability: The Pedagogy of the Logos in Philo and the Fourth Gospel

How could the soul have conceived of God, had He not breathed into it and mightily laid hold of it? For the human mind would never have ventured to soar so high as to grasp the nature of God, *had not God Himself drawn it up to Himself*, so far as it was possible that the mind of man should be drawn up, and stamped it with the impress of the powers that are within the scope of its understanding.

PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA, *Legum Allegoriae* 1.38

Philo and John: Two Portraits of an Adaptable Logos

In her essay, “Pauline Accommodation and ‘Condescension’ (συγκατάβασις),” Margaret Mitchell demonstrates, in part, that Philo characterized the descent (κατάβασις) of various heavenly intermediaries, notably ὁ Λόγος, as an act of divine adaptability. Moreover, she shows how this aspect of Philo’s thought helped pave the way for early Christian conceptions of the incarnation.¹ Specifically, Mitchell argues that Philo’s God frequently engages with humanity in ways that resemble the very techniques of adaptability as those outlined in the previous chapter, and that early Christians—such as the Alexandrians Clement and Origen—in turn applied the concept of adaptability to the descent of the divine Λόγος in Jesus Christ.² In short, the Λόγος in both Philo

1 Margaret M. Mitchell, “Pauline Accommodation and ‘Condescension’ (συγκατάβασις): 1 Cor 9:19–23 and the History of Influence,” in *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (ed. Troels Engberg-Pedersen; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 205–208. Other works that discuss in depth the idea of Paul as representing adaptability in antiquity include: Abraham J. Malherbe, ed., *Moral Exhortation: A Greco-Roman Sourcebook* (LEC 4; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986); Idem, *Paul and the Popular Philosophers* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989); Clarence E. Glad, *Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychagogy* (NovTSup 81; Leiden: Brill, 1995); Idem, “Paul and Adaptability,” in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook* (ed. J. Paul Sampley; New York: Trinity Press International, 2003), 17–41; Margaret M. Mitchell, “‘A Variable and Many-sorted Man’: John Chrysostom’s Treatment of Pauline Inconsistency,” *JECs* 6 (1998): 93–111.

2 Mitchell, “Pauline Accommodation,” 208.

and early Christian writers is closely tied to God's adaptable psychagogy. Yet between Philo and writers like Clement or Origen stands the Fourth Gospel, which contains both a figure called ὁ Λόγος, as well as references to the Word's κατέβασις ("descent"; e.g., John 3:13). Might the Fourth Gospel's portrayal of the Word similarly reflect an expression of divine pedagogy?³

To answer this question, this chapter will focus on several parallels and similarities between the Logos of Philo and the Word of the Fourth Gospel. The exact relationship between Philo and the Gospel remains a subject of debate, although a consensus has emerged that John's Logos seems to emerge from the same sorts of ideas that Philo's Logos does.⁴ This consensus points toward an important recognition for the present study, i.e., that the divine Word of

-
- 3 While Mitchell, Malherbe, and Glad have helped bring adaptability into the discussions of Paul, the only examples of discussing adaptability in the Fourth Gospel are in two brief treatments by George L. Parsenios, "Adaptability and the Good Shepherd (John 10:1–11; 1 Cor. 9:19–23)," *PSB* 25 (2004): 248–253; Idem, "The Jesus of History and Divine Adaptability in St. John Chrysostom's Interpretation of John 4," in *Jesus Research: New Methodologies and Perceptions—The Second Princeton-Prague Symposium on Jesus Research*; Princeton 2007 (ed. James H. Charlesworth and Petr Pokorný; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2014, 863–73). Importantly, in both essays Parsenios draws heavily upon John Chrysostom's reading of the Fourth Gospel, which will also provide an important resource for the present study.
 - 4 To be sure, there is no evidence whatsoever of a genetic relationship between Philo and John, or even evidence for a mediated Philonic influence upon the evangelist. Nevertheless, many scholars claim that reading Philo illuminates things in the Gospel that might otherwise be missed, since both Philo and the Evangelist share at least some common traditions. Views that assign a the positive interpretive role for the Philonic corpus vis-à-vis the Logos include (among others): C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 54–73; Peder Borgen, "Logos Was the True Light: Contributions to the Interpretation of the Prologue of John," *NovT* 14 (1972): 115–130; Charles H. Talbert, "Myth of a Descending-Ascending Redeemer in Mediterranean Antiquity," *NTS* 22 (1976): 427–28; Thomas H. Tobin, "The Prologue of John and Hellenistic Jewish Speculation," *CBQ* 52 (1990): 252–269; David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (CRINT 3; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 78–83; James D.G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (2nd ed.; London: SCM, 1996), 215–50; Daniel Boyarin, "The Gospel of the Memra: Jewish Binitarianism and the Prologue of John," *HTR* 94 (2001): 243–84; Harold W. Attridge, "Philo and John: Two Riffs on One Logos," *SPhilo* 17 (2005): 103–117; Gregory E. Sterling, "'Day One': Platonizing Exegetical Traditions of Genesis 1:1–5 in John and Jewish Authors," *SPhilo* 17 (2005): 118–140. There are, to be sure, some dissenting voices who suggest that the Philonic Logos is a "red herring," and direct attention elsewhere, often to Gnosticism, the Targums, or the Evangelist himself: Rudolf K. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (trans. G.R. Beasley-Murray, R.W.N. Hoare, and J.K. Riches; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 23–28; Martin McNamara, "The Logos of the Fourth Gospel and Memra of the Palestinian Targum, Ex 12:42," *ExpTim* 79 (1968): 115–117;

the Fourth Evangelist shares some interesting, if not coincidental, parallels to the Philonic Logos.⁵ In particular, what interests me about these two variations of the Logos has to do with the ways in which both Philo and John paint the Logos in shades of adaptability, the very sort noted in the previous chapter.

First, then, I will sketch Philo's understanding of the psychagogy of the Logos, giving reference to the categories of adaptable pedagogy common in the Greco-Roman world. Some have already noted the psychagogic element of Philo's Logos theology, and the observations here will build on the work of such scholars.⁶ Specifically, it will become clear that Philo makes use of the idea of descent (*κατάβασις*) to characterize the Word's psychagogy. For Philo, the *κατάβασις* of the Logos both reflects the bridging of divine and human realms, and arises out of God's concern for humanity to improve in virtue, and ultimately to help individuals arrive at the contemplation of God's essence (the highest good in Philo's thought).⁷ Moreover, not only does the Logos descend to humanity, but also employs a variety of methods for assisting each individual to reach his or her divinely given aims.

In the same way, I will show how the Fourth Evangelist portrays the *κατάβασις* of the Son as an expression of divine adaptability, albeit in a slightly different manner than Philo's Logos.⁸ Highlighting the similarities between John and Philo on the notion of descent will in turn clarify many of the Evangelist's

Ed. L. Miller, "The Johannine Origins of the Johannine Logos," *JBL* 112 (1993): 445–457; John L. Ronning, *The Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2010).

5 For a brief outline of such similarities, see Gregory E. Sterling, "The Place of Philo of Alexandria in the Study of Christian Origins," in *Philo und das Neue Testament: Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen. I. Internationales Symposium zum corpus Judaeo-Hellenisticum 1.–4. Mai 2003, Eisenach/Jena* (ed. Ronald Deines and Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 48–50; Attridge, "Two Riffs," 17:117. One of the more exhaustive comparisons among recent scholars is Folker Siegert, "Philo and the New Testament," in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo* (ed. Adam Kamesar; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 195–204. Looking at the two authors through the lens of the adaptability *topos* will, however, highlight further similarities between the two portrayals of the Logos.

6 Notably, David Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1985); Thomas H. Tobin, "Logos," *ABD*, 4.348–56; Ronald R. Cox, *By the Same Word: Creation and Salvation in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 133–138; Tzvi Novick, "Perspective, Paideia, and Accommodation in Philo," *SPhilo* 21 (2009): 49–62.

7 *Migr.* 170–75; *QE* 2.51. See also Ellen Birnbaum, *The Place of Judaism in Philo's Thought: Israel, Jews, and Proselytes* (BJS 290; SPhiloM 2; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 5, 80.

8 Or, to take up Attridge's metaphor, John "riffs" on Philo's presentation of the Logos; "Two Riffs," 104.

presuppositions concerning Jesus' character, aims, and methods. I will also make some brief probes into specific passages that, once read with the concept of adaptable pedagogy in mind, can make better sense of otherwise difficult passages and concepts, or lift out otherwise overlooked points of the Evangelist's thought.

The Descent of the Logos: Philo

A single passage from Philo will introduce many of the major elements and key terms for the descent of the Logos in his thought. In *Somn.* 1.147, while exploring the description of Jacob's dream about the ladder (Gen. 28:10–17), Philo writes about the human soul and about the spirits—angels or “words” (λόγοι)—who minister to the soul, who work to excise the earthly and to lead the soul toward sublime truth. Philo also makes reference here to the divine Logos, who he elsewhere calls the “eldest angel” (ὁ ἀγγέλων πρεσβύτατος) and “chief angel” (ὁ ἀρχάγγελος),⁹ who with God authorizes the activity of these λόγοι. He writes:

Up and down (ἄνω δὲ καὶ κάτω) throughout [the soul's] whole extent are incessantly moving the ‘words’ (λόγοι) of God, drawing it up with them when they ascend and disconnecting it with what is mortal, and exhibiting to it the spectacle of the only objects worthy of our gaze; and when they descend (κατέρχονται) not casting it down, for neither does God nor does the Divine Word (Λόγος θεῖος) cause harm, but condescending out of love for humanity and compassion (συγκαταβαίνοντες διὰ φιλανθρωπίαν καὶ ἔλεον) for our race, to be helpers and comrades, that with the healing of their breath they may quicken into new life the soul which is still borne along in the body as in a river.¹⁰

Here one sees the Logos (with its subordinate λόγοι) descending into the world in order to instruct individuals in virtue, to guide them to salvation, all motivated by divine concern for humanity. Indeed, this passage shows clear traces of the adaptability *topos*: the Logos (as divine agent) possesses omnipotence, attempts to persuade, acts out of loving concern, and comes down to the level

9 For the role of angels as agents of the Logos, cf. *Her.* 205; *Conf.* 146–47; *Cher.* 27.

10 *Somn.* 1.147. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Philo come from Colson and Whitakers's translation in the Loeb Classical Library.

of others for the sake of leading them upward. As I delve deeper into Philo's account of the Logos' descent, these aspects will reemerge and expand, even as others come to light.

Philonic Terminology for Adaptability

Philo employs a wide lexicon to discuss the psychagogy of the Logos.¹¹ He makes use of one term of particular interest for this study of the Fourth Gospel: ὁ Λόγος. In Philo's thought, the figure of the Logos plays several roles, particularly in mediating between God and the creation:

To His Word, His chief messenger, highest in age and in honour, the Father of all has given the special prerogative to stand on the border and separate the creature from the Creator. This same Word both pleads with the immortal as suppliant for afflicted mortality and acts as ambassador of the ruler to the subject. He glories in the prerogative and proudly describes it these words, "and I stood between the Lord and you" [Deut. 5:5], that is neither uncreated as God, nor created as you, but midway between the two extremes, a surety to both sides; to the parent, pledging the creature that it should never altogether rebel against the rein and choose disorder rather than order; to the child, warranting his hopes that the merciful God will never forget His own work.¹²

In Philo's Middle Platonic thought, the perfect, immutable God could not, by definition, engage with the changing, imperfect cosmos—a view that coheres well with Philo's Jewish religious sensibilities, which restrict

11 There is as yet no comprehensive account of the Logos as "soul guide" in Philo, though the concept undergirds much of Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology*. Others, however, have explicitly developed Winston's implications, such as Cox, *By the Same Word*, 133–138. Both Winston and Cox note that the ascent of the soul to God is a completion of the life of the soul, which originates for Philo from God, and so the ascent is really a return to the soul's "homeland" (cf. *Gig.* 13–14). Cox sums up the notion of the Logos' role in the soul's heavenly ascent well: "The Logos, which functions in the creation and guidance of the universe, is . . . shown to be integral to the successful ascent of the soul. The Logos provides the psychic ascent its ultimate destination, for in its proximity to the Deity it gives the soul the best of vantage points to see God. The Logos also provides the ascent its means, namely rationality" (*By the Same Word*, 138).

12 *Her.* 205–206.

interaction between the immaterial God and the material world.¹³ So God could only guide humanity to its goal of virtue via the use of a mediator who was neither created nor entirely uncreated, such as the Logos.¹⁴ Thus, the Logos' very existence arises out of an act of divine accommodation to humanity, driven by a concern for the race (i.e., φιλανθρωπία).

The terminology of "descent" (κατάβασις; also κατέρχομαι) serves as another important aspect of the Logos' pedagogy in Philo. The Logos actually "comes down" through the levels of the cosmos to interact with the creation, as in *Somn.* 1.147 above.¹⁵ But this descent within the material realm also encompasses a metaphorical coming down, in which the Word accommodates to the cognitive or moral level of individual souls in order to help those souls advance upward toward virtue.

Philo expands the metaphor of descent and adaptability further through his language of "above" (ἄνω, ἀνώθεν) and "below" (κάτω). Simply put, "above"

-
- 13 In *Spec.* 1.329, Philo notes that God's nature even forbids Him make contact with the material cosmos, and describes this state of things in a thoroughly platonic way: "For when out of that confused matter God produced all things, He did not do so with His own handiwork, since His nature, happy and blessed as it was, forbade that *He should touch the limitless chaotic matter*. Instead He made full use of the incorporeal potencies well denoted by their name of Forms to enable each kind to take its appropriate shape" (emphasis added).
- 14 R.M. Berchman describes the ontology of the Logos as being *absolute* (as opposed to relative) yet *qualified* (rather than unqualified). This is in contrast both to God's ontology (absolute and unqualified) or that of the created order (relative and qualified); see Berchman, "The Categories of Being in Middle Platonism: Philo, Clement, and Origen of Alexandria," in *The School of Moses: Studies in Philo and Hellenistic Religion in Memory of Horst R. Moehring* (ed. John Peter Kinney; BJS 304/ SPhilo M 1; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 117.
- 15 The focus of the present discussion does not allow for a discussion of the role of the Logos in creation as a whole. Nevertheless, this topic has been well covered in Philo scholarship. See Thomas H. Tobin, *The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation* (CBQ MS 14; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1983); Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology*, 49–50; Tobin, "Logos," *ABD* 4:350; John M. Dillon, *The Middle Platonists, 80 BC to AD 220* (Rev. ed.; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 158–166; Peter Frick, *Divine Providence in Philo of Alexandria* (TSAJ 77; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 108–116; David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria—On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Philo of Alexandria Commentary 1; Leiden: Brill, 2001); Kenneth Schenck, *A Brief Guide to Philo* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 59–60; Cox, *By the Same Word*, 103–130. That both the Philonic Logos and its Johannine counterpart play a starring role in God's work in creation strengthens the correspondences between Philo and John explored below.

refers to the realm of God, the divine, and virtue, whereas “below” points to things earthly, mortal, and full of vice.¹⁶ Philo employs this language of “below” and “above” to indicate (respectively) the individual’s starting point and to where the soul should advance. Thus, Philo characterizes the progress of the virtuous person as upward ascent, with each stage in development moving from one level higher (ἀνωτέρω) to the next.¹⁷ The Logos, then, for the sake of guidance descends from “above” in order to help those who dwell “below” to ascend toward heavenly virtue.

Philo also discusses the Logos’ activity as instruction, using terms referring to guidance (ἄγειν and derived verbs), teaching (διδάσκειν), and educating (παιδεύειν), in addition to related actions such as illuminating (φαίνειν), persuading (πειθεῖν), and healing (ἰασθαί).¹⁸ In Philo’s thought, the Logos does far more than tend to individual souls, to be sure, but he nevertheless frequently characterizes the Logos as acting as a pedagogue for humanity by using such verbs as these.¹⁹ Moreover, even when Philo does not use these particular terms, his Logos still acts in ways that look very much like adaptable psychagogy, as I will make evident.

Features of the Logos’ Adaptability

As with other thinkers roughly contemporary to him, Philo has several presuppositions about the universe, humanity, and God (particularly divine transcendence and immutability) that make adaptability a prerequisite for humanity to achieve its intended end. Yet other things that Philo affirms, particularly about God’s character and the function of the Logos, enable Philo to portray the adaptability of the Logos as an outgrowth of divine care. Moreover, the Philonic Logos engages in adaptability in a number of different (though related) realms, such as the cosmic, the moral, the rhetorical, and the cognitive, and yet each of these kinds of adaptability flow out of the same set of presuppositions.

One cannot overstate the centrality of the first presupposition governing Philo’s worldview, whether it pertains to the Logos’ adaptability or any other aspect of Philo’s philosophical thought: the transcendence and immutability

16 Cf. *Her.* 184, 274; Philo notes, however, that God is simultaneously everywhere and nowhere, filling entire the cosmos; cf. *Migr.* 182.

17 *Opif.* 69–71.

18 Cf. *Post.* 130; *Agr.* 49–51; *Fug.* 6; *Deus* 134, 182–183; *Somn.* 1.69, 112, 172. “Healing,” as I will argue, concerns not simply physical ailments, but also moral maladies.

19 Cf. *Leg.* 3.173.

of God. Philo refers to God as ὁ ὢν (“the Existent One”),²⁰ and his God remains beyond all human language and thought. Moreover, God and humanity represent mutually exclusive levels of existence, at least in Philo’s Platonic world-view. God’s perfect existence (εἶναι, or “being”) stands opposite the contingent existence of all things (γινέσθαι, or “becoming”), which includes the human race. These two ontological categories are irreconcilable: perfect, unchanging “being” has nothing to do with flawed, mutable “becoming.”²¹ Moreover, in Philo’s thought, God’s “being” is thus utterly transcendent, incapable of being perceived, much less touched by the material world of “becoming.”²²

Philo’s tiered ontology, divided between “being” (εἶναι) and “becoming” (γινέσθαι), also results in a tiered cosmology, with the polar notions of a heaven above (ἄνω) and earth below (κάτω).²³ Heaven and earth also represent a number of opposing pairs: virtue-vice, mind-body,²⁴ life-death,²⁵ and wisdom-ignorance,²⁶ among others. Thus, any good thing enjoyed by humanity must come ἄνωθεν ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ, or from the fount of divine providence.²⁷ For Philo, this distinction between heaven and earth serves as a helpful analogue to Plato’s ideal and material world, with the former serving as the better, perfect form of the latter, flawed copy.²⁸ Yet, apart from the Logos, any interaction between image and copy, above and below would be utterly impossible.

These ontological and cosmic gaps give birth to an epistemological one: Philo’s Existent One (ὁ ὢν or τὸ ὄν) can only be apprehended by that which, like

20 Philo’s unique blend of Jewish and Middle Platonic theology here complement one another, as Ex. 3:14 (explored in *Mos.* 1.75) seems to give exegetical warrant to Greek philosophical conceptions of a first principle, such as the Monad or Absolute Being: καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸς Μωυσήν Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν.

21 *Opif.* 12; *Mos.* 1.75. Much more could be said on this subject; for a fuller discussion of the relationship between the various ontologies in Philo’s universe, see F. Gerald Downing, “Ontological Asymmetry in Philo and Christological Realism in Paul, Hebrews and John,” *JTS* 41 (1990): 425–27; Berchman, “Categories,” 115–118, 139. Berchman’s essay helpfully focuses not only on Philo, but also on Clement of Alexandria and Origen (writers who shared many of Philo’s philosophical presuppositions), not to mention key philosophical forbears of Philo (e.g., Eudorus).

22 Again, see *Spec.* 1.329.

23 *Her.* 184, 274.

24 *Her.* 274.

25 *Opif.* 69; *Leg.* 1.103, 108; *Spec.* 4.188.

26 *Deus* 143.

27 *Opif.* 21; *Abr.* 157; *Fug.* 138; *Somn.* 2.142; for the relationship between God’s goodness and good things in the created world—or God’s goodness as the source for goodness in the world—see Frick, *Divine Providence*, 61–73.

28 *Opif.* 25

the Deity, consists of pure existence. In other words, only God can know God.²⁹ So how does humanity, dwelling below and in the world of becoming, attain to knowledge of the divine? Philo assumes that humanity cannot possibly possess knowledge of God on its own—a problem since, apart from such knowledge, humanity remains consigned to mortality with no hope of salvation.³⁰ Humanity thus finds itself utterly separated from the only One who might save it.³¹

These presuppositions about God and their subsequent consequences for the human-divine relationship do not mean that human-divine relationship is altogether impossible. Rather, into the stark ontological, epistemological, and cosmological divide between God and humanity steps the Logos, which, as a being whose ontology depends upon God yet remains distinct from God, is capable of interacting with the material cosmos, and does so extensively in Philo's works.³² Philo's Logos creates the material cosmos, reveals God to humanity, and descends from heaven to earth, and in so doing, mediates between Creator and creature.³³ Philo's Logos, moreover, does not just *mediate* between Creator and creature, but also *accommodates* to weak, ignorant humanity in order to persuade individuals to pursue virtue and to instruct them in truth. Importantly, the act of descent, or *κατάβασις*, provides the key conceptual metaphor for all of the Logos' activity toward creation, especially that which pertains to humanity's salvation.

Philo also imagines that the Logos engages in *κατάβασις* because God genuinely cares for the creation, and so commissions the Logos as the agent of divine benefaction. Philo believes that God wants creatures—humanity in particular—to enjoy all the benefits awaiting them. The apex of those benefits is the contemplation of the existence of *ὁ ὢν* (the *visio Dei*).³⁴ God created

29 Frick, *Divine Providence*, 34.

30 *Praem.* 69–70; 152; *Somn.* 1.151.

31 Frick, *Divine Providence*, 33–34.

32 Berchman, "Categories," 117.

33 "[T]he everlasting Word of the eternal God is the very sure and staunch prop of the whole. He it is, who extending Himself from the midst to its utmost bounds and from its extremities to the midst again, keeps up through all its length Nature's unvanquished course, combining and compacting all its parts. For the Father Who begat Him constituted His Word such a Bond of the Universe as nothing can break" (*Plant.* 8–9).

34 "For Philo, 'seeing God' is the height of human happiness. His ideas about this experience are strongly influenced by Greek philosophical—and, especially, Platonic—notions. Since Philo is not consistent about what it means to see God, one cannot always distinguish between the quest to see Him and its fulfillment. I shall therefore speak of seeing God as both a quest and a goal. I shall also use the word 'mystical' to describe this quest

humanity for this end, and God's concern for humanity motivates the Logos' activity among human souls. That is, Philo frequently attributes the teaching and guidance of the Logos to divine compassion. Philo utilizes God's speech to Jacob in Gen. 46:4 to illustrate this attribute:

[W]hen God comes to that which is proper to creation, His words will quite rightly be, "I will go down with you;" (ἐγὼ μετὰ σοῦ καταβήσομαι) for to you change of place is appropriate . . . And with those who go down in the sense of changing their place . . . I will go down, in all-pervading Presence without any alteration of locality, seeing I have filled the universe with Myself. *I do this in pity* for the rational nature (διὰ φύσεως οἰκτον λογικῆς), that it may be caused to rise (ἀναβιβασθῆ) out of the nether world of the passions and into the upper region of virtue guided step by step by Me, Who have laid down the road that leads to heaven (τῇν εἰς οὐρανὸν ἄγουσαν ὁδὸν) and appointed it as a highway for all suppliant souls, that they might not grow weary as they tread it."³⁵

Elsewhere, Philo describes how God sends (ἀποστέλλει) the Light (the Word)—who *is* salvation—to humanity "out of compassion for our race" (δι' ἔλεον τοῦ γένους ἡμῶν).³⁶ Philo draws upon Exod. 23:20 to characterize the Logos' commission from God: "Behold, I am sending (LXX ἀποστέλλω) my angel before you, that he might guard you on the way, and that he might guide you (LXX εἰσαγάγῃ) to the place that I have prepared for you." In *QE* 2.13, Philo explains what this "angel" truly is:

An angel is an intellectual soul or rather wholly mind, wholly incorporeal, made a minister of God, and appointed over certain needs and the service of the race of mortals, to receive the gifts and benefactions extended by God. For it was not capable of bearing the multitude of His good gifts. Therefore of necessity was the Word appointed as judge and mediator, who is called "angel."³⁷

or goal, understanding mysticism loosely as the impulse to have a direct, i.e., unmediated, experience of God, who is transcendent and immaterial" (Birnbbaum, *Place of Judaism*, 5).

35 *Post.* 30–31, emphasis added.

36 *Somn.* 1.112. Of the Word, he writes: "ψυχῆς παθῶν ὁ λόγος ἐστὶ σωτήριον . . ."

37 This is a reflection of God's own accommodating nature, as seen in *Somn.* 1.232: "To the souls indeed which are incorporeal and are occupied in His worship it is likely that He should reveal Himself as He is, conversing with them as friend with friends; but to souls which are still in a body, giving Himself the likeness of angels, not altering His own nature,

The Logos, being “wholly mind,” thus shares in God’s omniscience, and so acts as the most fitting guide for humanity. Moreover, the Logos shares God’s concern for creation, and so the Logos’ descent to humanity, like the activity of any ideal psychagogue, arises out of a beneficent attitude toward the student.

The Logos, under the impulse of divine compassion for each soul, manifests its adaptability in several ways. Already I have noted the cosmological and epistemological problems in Philo’s thought. How the Logos solves these problems constitutes two distinct (though related) kinds of adaptability on the part of the Logos. The cosmic aspect of adaptability constitutes the most conceptually clear aspect of adaptability in Philo. So, for example, here the Logos descends to bring knowledge and wisdom to Israel in Philo’s exploration of the significance of manna in *Fuga* 137–138:

When they [the Israelites] sought what it is that nourished the soul (for, as Moses says, “They knew not what it was,”) they became learners and found it to be a saying of God, that is, the Divine Word (ῥῆμα θεοῦ καὶ λόγον θεῖον), from which all kinds of instruction and wisdom (πάσαι παιδεῖαι καὶ σοφαί) flow in perpetual stream. This is the heavenly nourishment, and it is indicated as such in the sacred records, when the First Cause in his own person says, “Lo, it is I that am raining upon you bread out of heaven” (Ex. 16:4); for in very deed God drops from above (ἄνωθεν) the ethereal wisdom upon minds which are by nature apt and take delight in contemplation. . . .³⁸

This passage shows the strong overlap between cosmic and cognitive aspects of adaptability, as the Word imparts heavenly wisdom, or knowledge of things divine, by virtue of this descent.³⁹ Elsewhere, Philo refers to the Word as light “unquenchable and imperishable, brought to us from heaven above (ἄνωθεν ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πρὸς ἡμᾶς φερόμενον), where each of the stars pours forth its rays as though from perpetual fountains.”⁴⁰ Connecting the descent of the

for He is unchangeable, but conveying to those which receive the impression of his presence a semblance in a different form, such that they take the image to be not a copy, but that original form itself.”

38 *Fug.* 137–38. That Philo deals with the concept of manna naturally reminds many of John 6; cf. the classic by Peder Borgen, *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo* (Leiden: Brill, 1965).

39 For examples of instances where the Logos conveys specific knowledge of divine truth or virtue, see: *Ebr.* 81; *Migr.* 90; *Her.* 79, 207; *Mut.* 18; *Somn.* 1.234.

40 *Abr.* 157. For a more explicit correlation between the Word and light in Philo, see *Opif.* 31; *Migr.* 47–48; *Somn.* 1.75, 115.

Logos to ideas such as “wisdom” and “light,” Philo points his reader to the educative purpose of this descent, which was similarly visible in *Somn.* 1.147. He makes this clear in *Fug.* 137 above, where he calls the Logos the source of “all instruction and wisdom” (πάσαι παιδεῖαι καὶ σοφαίαι), which includes teaching humanity about virtue and the purpose of life.

But knowledge about virtue helps humanity little, so the Logos also aims at persuading souls to pursue virtue. This aspect appears in *Fug.* 5, in which Philo sees the Logos both encouraging (παραινέσονται) and showing the way (ὁδηγούμενον) to Hagar (cf. Gen. 16:1–16). The Logos, recognizing the diversity of dispositions in the human soul, also adapts the means of persuasion:

The sacred Word enjoins some persons what they ought to do by positive command, like a king; to others it suggests what will be for their advantage, as a teacher (διδάσκαλος) does to his pupils; to others again, it is like a counselor suggesting the wisest plans; and in this way too, it is of great advantage to those who do not of themselves know what is expedient; to others it is like a friend, in a mild and persuasive manner (μετὰ πειθοῦς), bringing forward many secret things which no uninitiated person may lawfully hear.⁴¹

Already one can see not only how the Logos’ pedagogy encompasses persuasive activity, but also how the Logos varies the *type* of persuasion, accommodating (like a good teacher) to the various types of students.

Having persuaded people to pursue virtue, the Logos’ psychagogy then can work toward the healing of the human soul, i.e., moral therapy.⁴² Turning again to *Somn.* 1.69, Philo describes how the divine λόγοι come to aid the virtuous, and that these λόγοι also “heal and completely cure the infirmities of the soul (ιατρεύουσι καὶ ἐκνοσηλεύσι τὰ ψυχῆς ἀρρωστήματα)”. Moreover, the virtuous person is urged to run to “the supreme (ἀνωτάτω) Divine Word, Who is the fountain of Wisdom, in order that he may draw from the stream and find life eternal rather than death (ἀντὶ θανάτου ζῶν ἄιδιον) as his prize.”⁴³ The Logos,

⁴¹ *Somn.* 1.191.

⁴² Indeed, for Philo considering the notion of “cognitive development” apart from “spiritual progress” would be misleading. For more on moral therapy among many Hellenistic philosophers, see Martha C. Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

⁴³ *Fug.* 97.

then, not only teaches, but shows also the way to eternal life.⁴⁴ In this way, Philo's notions of salvation and the possession of knowledge go hand-in-hand, not unlike these same notions in the Fourth Gospel.⁴⁵

In *Somn.* 1.69, Philo indicates a further aspect of the adaptability of the Logos: "For God, *not deeming it meet that sense should perceive Him*, sends forth His Words (λόγους) to succour the lovers of virtue. . . ." As Philo frequently notes, the body often hampers the soul, and many individuals require a perceptible manifestation of the divine in order to entice them to pursue virtue. Yet God remains imperceptible to the senses, and here again the Logos steps in, impelled by God's love, to appear in the place of God.⁴⁶ This perceptibility is not just a kind of adaptability, but contributes to a particular pedagogical technique: the use of corporeal signs.

In short, Philo's Logos engages in several of types of adaptability, yet each arises from Philo's presuppositions about the relationship between God and humanity. Adaptability in the activity of the Logos overcomes the otherwise insurmountable divides between the divine and human realms. The Logos responds to these divides in many different ways (cosmic, cognitive, moral, perceptive) and so imparts to human souls the capacity to meet their created purpose, i.e., the contemplation of God and perfection in virtue.

The Pedagogical Techniques of Philo's Logos

Having demonstrated *why* Philo's Logos engages in psychagogy, now the discussion can turn to *how* this takes place. The Logos employs many different techniques in Philo's works, techniques that resonate strongly with the same techniques found throughout the Greco-Roman world. Specifically, Philo depicts the Logos: 1) accommodating to the needs and unique dispositions of each individual; 2) allowing temporary concessions and minor errors that encourage advancement; 3) making use of perceptible signs and information; and 4) teaching by degrees, or modifying the guidance as the pupil advances and changes.

As noted earlier, the Logos does not persuade, teach, guide, or heal all people in the same way. Rather, the Logos guides an individual according to the

44 Indeed, as David Winston notes, "Although all are born in the image of God and therefore have a natural claim on joyful immortality, Philo clearly makes the claim conditional on the soul's assimilation to divine wisdom and its pursuit of the life of perfect virtue" (*Logos and Mystical Theology*, 38). Cf. *QG* 1.53; *Opif.* 154; *Conf.* 149.

45 See discussion below; pp. 73–76.

46 Cf. *Somn.* 1.61–67, where Philo describes thoroughly how the Logos appears in the place of God, making much out of the reference to "a certain *place*" in Gen. 28:11.

specific needs of that person, as Philo describes while commenting on the Word's interactions with Hagar (Gen. 16:1–16):

Hagar's motive for departing is shame. A sign of this is the fact that an angel, the Divine Word, meets her to advise the right course, and to suggest return to the house of her mistress. This angel addresses her in the encouraging words, 'The Lord has given heed to your humiliation' (Gen 16:11), a humiliation prompted neither by fear nor hatred . . . but by shame, the outward expression of inward modesty. Had she run away owing to fear, the angel probably would have moved her who had inspired the fear to a gentler frame of mind [i.e., Sarai]. . . . But it is Hagar who is taught by conviction, whose goodwill to her makes him at once her friend and counselor, not to feel only shame, but to be of good courage as well; pointing out that shame apart from confidence is but half a virtue.⁴⁷

The Logos exhibits adaptability in his pedagogy, not only coming down to the level of those needing to be taught, but accommodating also to their needs. Another example of this attention to the needs of the individual comes from *Abr.* 52: "For the holy Word (ἱερός λόγος) seems to be searching into types of souls, all of them of high worth, one which pursues the good through teaching, one through nature and one through practice."⁴⁸

The idea of the Word's accommodation to individuals also provides the rationale for Philo's allegorizing of the cities of refuge (Num. 35:9–15) in *Fug.* 94–105. The six cities are, in Philo's interpretive schema, the various powers of God under the governance of the Word (94–95). Again, these cities are not all equal, but rather are points on the path toward an ever-greater understanding and appreciation of the powers of the Existent One. At one point a person needs to know what actions to avoid, at another time what should be done, and at still another time requires mercy and/or discipline (98). Ultimately, the aim is to arrive at that most glorious city, the Word (94, 97). Importantly, it is the Logos who administers these various other cities, providing them for the ongoing development of various individual souls.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ *Fug.* 5–6.

⁴⁸ In this particular passage, Philo allegorizes what he believes to be the central characteristics of each of the three patriarchs, Abraham (teaching), Isaac (nature), and Jacob (practice). Shortly after the section cited here, Philo affirms that the best soul is the one that relies equally upon all three of these aspects (*Abr.* 53).

⁴⁹ See also *QG* 4.102: "[I]n another passage sacred Scripture (orders) the measuring of the spiritual food that came forth from the ether and heaven like a spring and was called

In Philo's view most individuals required not just abstract instruction, but also perceptible events to encourage them in their pursuit of virtue. Here, the term *κατάβασις* again becomes an aid for instruction. While there are the occasional references in the Bible to the descent of God's agents (as in Gen. 28:13), more frequent are accounts of *God's* descent (e.g., Gen. 11:5, 7; Ex. 19:18). Indeed, even Gen. 28:16 suggests that not only were angels present at Bethel, but also God: "Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, 'Truly, the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it!'" For Philo, such passages cause theological embarrassment, at least at the literal level.⁵⁰ With his emphatic denial that God moves about the cosmos, or that God could be in a single place or perceived by the human mind,⁵¹ he could not accept such accounts of divine descent literally or simply, at least not without committing a grave impiety.⁵² Instead, Philo suggests that while Moses writes "God" in these instances, what he really means is the Logos, who appears to humanity as the chief representative of ὁ ὢν:

What is the meaning of the words, "They saw the place where the God of Israel was standing, and under His feet (was something) like the work of a plinth of sapphire and like the form of the firmament of heaven in purity" (Exod. 24:10)? All this is, in the first place, most suitably to and worthy of the theologian [Moses], for no one will boast of seeing the invisible God, thus yielding to arrogance. And holy and divine is this same place alone in which He is said to appear, for He Himself does not go away or change His position but He sends the powers, which are indicative of His essence. And if it is right (to say so, we may) say that this place is

'manna' by the Hebrews, that it might not be too much for anyone or too little. For it is necessary that teaching should be more abundant for the intelligent man, and less for the foolish man because of the fine equality of the proportion."

- 50 While Philo typically refrains from admitting that any human could see God, he does push the boundaries of his position in *QG* 4.2: "For so soon as one sets eyes upon God, there also appear, together with His being, the ministering powers, so that in place of one He makes the appearance of a triad. For when the mind begins to have an apprehension of the Existent One, He is known to have arrived there, making (Himself) unique, and appearing as chief and sovereign. But, as I said a little earlier, He cannot be seen in His oneness without something (else), the chief powers that exist immediately with Him, (namely) the creative, which is called God, and the kingly, which is called Lord."

For more on the ambiguity regarding "seeing God" in Philo, see Scott D. Mackie, "Seeing God in Philo of Alexandria: the Logos, the Powers, or the Existent One?," *SPhilo* 21 (2009): 25–47.

51 *Post.* 168–169.

52 *Leg.* 3.206–208; cf. Philo's discussion on God's "descent" to Babel in *Conf.* 134–39.

that of His Word, since He has never given a suspicion of movement but always of standing, for the nature of the Father remains fixed and unchanged and more lucid and simpler than the number one which alone is a form of likeness.⁵³

Thus, Philo sees instances in scripture where God “descends” or otherwise appears to mere mortals as instances of the *Logos*’ descent and appearance.⁵⁴ Such appearances take place above all for the sake of humanity, which frequently needs a sense-perceptible starting point in order to ascend to the noetic realm.⁵⁵ This does not imply mutability on the part of the *Logos*, however, but suggests only the *Logos*’ willingness to forego the proper dignity of divinity for the benefit of created beings.

The *Logos* employs more than just appearances to aid individuals in this ascent, but uses also anthropomorphic descriptions of God’s actions. For example, Philo notes how Moses (inspired by the divine Word) will describe God as mutable or as less than omniscient, not because this is how God truly is, but because “those whose natural wit is more dense and dull, or whose early training has been mishandled, since they have no power of clear vision, need physicians in the shape of admonishers, who will devise the treatment proper to the present condition . . . All such may well learn the untruth, which will benefit them, if they cannot be brought to wisdom by truth.”⁵⁶ Philo’s *Logos*, as this passage witnesses, is not above employing the “medical lie.” Philo frequently juxtaposes two passages, “God is not like a human” (Num. 23:19) and “The Lord will instruct you as a person instructs his child” (Deut. 8:5), using them both to show that, while God far exceeds the limitations of humanity, God (via the *Logos*) often uses images as a teaching tool: “[T]o say that He uses hands or feet or any created part at all is not the true account. For God is not as a man (Num. 23:19). It is but the form employed merely for our instruction (ἐνεκα διδασκαλίας) because we cannot get outside ourselves, but frame our conceptions of the Uncreated from our own experiences.”⁵⁷

53 *QE* 2.37. See also *Somn.* 1.61–67 on the Word as a “place” where humans begin to encounter God.

54 Frick, *Divine Providence*, 34; Mackie, “Seeing God in Philo of Alexandria,” 33–34, 45.

55 A number of Philo scholars call this the *Logos*’ *anagogical* function; Tobin, “*Logos*,” 4.351; Schenck, *Philo*, 61; Mackie, “Seeing God in Philo of Alexandria,” 45.

56 *Deus* 63–64.

57 *Plant.* 50; cf. *Somn.* 1.237–28. For more on anthropomorphism as a pedagogical tool in Philo, see Novick, “Perspective, Paideia, and Accommodation in Philo.”

Philo's Logos also makes frequent use of concessions to teach. For example, Philo sees the use of the title "God" for the Existent One as a key example of such concessions.⁵⁸ Concessions can also take the form of biblical descriptions of God changing his mind, or becoming jealous, or displaying some characteristic Philo considers below the proper dignity of the Creator.⁵⁹ In one place, Philo characterizes such concessions to human weakness rather frankly:

We cannot get outside ourselves in forming our ideas; we cannot escape our inborn infirmities. . . . We shun indeed in words the monstrosity of saying that God is of human form, but in actual fact we accept the impious thought that He is of human passions. And therefore we invent for Him hands and feet, incomings and outgoings, enmities, aversions, estrangements, anger, in fact such parts and passions as can never belong to the cause. And of such is the oath—a mere crutch for our weakness (*ἀσθενείας*).⁶⁰

The "indecencies" arise not only out of concern for human weakness, but in order to allow such weaknesses not to impede too greatly the path of learning and perfection.

Concessions and corporeal images fall also within the same broad category as exemplars for the virtuous life, since each utilize analogy to elevate the soul. For Philo, none other than the Logos serves as the paradigm for human behavior.⁶¹ One can determine as much by the fact that Philo views the Logos as humanity's archetypal image that exemplifies the ideal human in every way.⁶² If God intends humanity to become perfect with respect to virtue, then the Logos provides the very model of perfect virtue.⁶³ Individuals can develop with respect to virtue through following this model, and thereby learn how God desires humanity to live.⁶⁴

58 *Post.* 168.

59 Cf. *Leg.* 3.206–208; *Deus* 22; *Conf.* 134–35; *Migr.* 182; *Abr.* 118.

60 *Sacr.* 95–96.

61 This notion was taken up as well in Clement of Alexandria, as discussed in the previous chapter (cf. p. 63).

62 Winston, *Logos and Mystical Theology*, 16–18.

63 *Ebr.* 133; *Somm.* 1.126.

64 Such is the basis of Philo's treatise, *De Virtutibus* (cf. §53).

The Logos does not instill all knowledge at once, however, but “teaches, leading on by degrees” (κατ’ ὀλίγον ἐπάγων ἐκδιδάσκει).⁶⁵ As Philo notes in his interpretation of the cities of refuge, the ability to contemplate the existence of ὁ ὢν does not come all at once to the student of the Logos, but only gradually:

“Do not,” says right Reason (ὁ ὀρθὸς λόγος), “give all you can, but as much as the man in want is capable of receiving.” Or do you fail to notice that even God imparts divine communications not in a way corresponding to the greatness of His own perfection, but *to the ever-varying capacity of those whom He would benefit*? Who could possibly have borne the force of the oracles of God which are too great for any power of hearing? . . . Were He to choose to display His own riches, even the entire earth with the sea turned into dry land would not contain them . . . Wherefore God ever causes His earliest gifts to cease before their recipients are glutted and wax insolent; and storing them up for the future gives others in their stead, and a third supply to replace the second, and ever new in place of earlier boons, sometimes different in kind, sometimes the same.⁶⁶

This incremental education and guidance, given enough time and effort on the part of the learner, results, little by little (κατ’ ὀλίγον), in the effulgence of virtue (λήγει. . . εἰς τὰς ὑπερβολὰς τῶν κατορθωμάτων), and so to the fulfillment of his or her purpose.⁶⁷

Summary: The Pedagogy of the Philonic Logos

The descent, or κατὰβασις, of the Logos in Philo appears both as a descent within the material realm and as a pedagogical technique aimed at aiding humanity in fulfilling its single goal (the *visio Dei*). The Logos comes down, having been sent by God, in order to save and heal a corrupted humanity, and does so motivated by God’s great love for humanity.⁶⁸ Through accommodating to the cosmic, cognitive, moral, and perceptive needs of humanity, the Logos enables individual souls to ascend toward union with God, to attain to everlasting life. Moreover, this guidance of individual souls attends to the unique needs of each, provides incremental education, and utilizes sense-perceptible manifestations for instruction and aid.

65 *Post.* 130.

66 *Post.* 142–45 (emphasis mine).

67 *Somn.* 2.198.

68 Already one might see how this connects to, e.g., John 3:16–17.

Characterized in this way, Philo's portrayal of the descent of the Logos resounds with traits of the adaptability *topos* discussed in the previous chapter. Philo's Logos possesses understanding of humanity and its needs (being divine and the creator of humanity); he displays an unchanging and trustworthy character (again, an outgrowth of divinity, indicated also by divine commission); the Logos willingly forsakes his proper dignity for humanity out of love; and he seeks to persuade people to pursue virtue. Moreover, while Philo's Logos interacts only rarely with individual characters, the Logos recognizes the varieties of souls and teaches each according to its own needs, and, importantly, the Logos guides these souls progressively toward perfection. In short, Philo's Logos appears eminently adaptable.

The Descent of the Son: The Fourth Gospel

For some time now, scholars have associated Johannine references to the "descent" (κατάβασις) of the Word with particular *topoi*, most notably the "heavenly redeemer" and "heavenly Son of Man" motifs.⁶⁹ Such motifs have, for the most part, dominated treatments of the "descent-ascent" schema among Johannine scholars.⁷⁰ Such attention has been largely associated "descent" motifs with situating the Gospel against the religio-historical background of various salvific figures, including Philo's Logos.⁷¹ What is usually assumed is that "descent" involves an ontological change of venue on the part of the savior

69 E.g., Rudolf K. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament; with a New Introduction by Robert Morgan* (trans. Kendrick Grobel; Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2007), 2.6, 12–13, 66; Wayne A. Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," *JBL* 91 (1972): 44–72; Talbert, "Myth," 22; Godfrey C. Nicholson, *Death as Departure: The Johannine Descent-Ascent Schema* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983).

70 So Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (AB 29; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), 1.132–133; Meeks, "Man from Heaven"; C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (2d ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978); Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (SP 4; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 94–95; Hartwig Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium* (HNT 6; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 202–208.

71 So Talbert, "Myth," 427–28. In his article, Talbert also makes several references to the ways in which Jewish Wisdom speculation participates in the ascent-descent schema of the "heavenly redeemer" motif. While such an investigation is beyond the scope of the present study, there is good reason to think that adaptability, or something very like it, lies behind much of the conceptualization of Wisdom's activity, especially among Hellenistic Jewish authors, including Philo (see, e.g., Wis. 7:1–8:1; Sir. 24; Bar. 3:9–4:4).

figure. But focus on that kind of paradigm misses another kind of “descent” that was very much in the mind of ancient readers of the Gospel, such as John Chrysostom, who understood “descent” more as an act of divine accommodation to humanity.

Indeed, as argued in the previous section, the language of the “descent” of the Logos in Philo participates at least as much in the conceptualization of adaptability as it does in the idea of a “heavenly redeemer.” In Philo, the concept of adaptability encompasses more comprehensively the activity of the Logos, so that the Word not only enacts redemption, but also enables humanity to possess knowledge of divine things and to develop in virtue. With respect to the Fourth Gospel, major elements of the “heavenly redeemer” motif can be understood in different ways under the heading of “adaptable pedagogy,” and in so doing connect more fully with themes and images throughout the Gospel. Yet adaptability does not just provide a more thoroughgoing conception of events, metaphors, and so on throughout the Gospel. Adaptability also allows modern readers to make better sense of some overlooked ideas and difficult passages in the Gospel, bringing to the fore Jesus’ psychagogical aims, and thereby creating an expedient conceptual category for interpreters confounded by the activity of the Johannine Jesus. Thus, I will first highlight some of the points of contact between Philo and John in their portrayal of the descent of the Word, and then I will turn to some passages that highlight the utility of adaptability for interpreting John.

Adaptability in John: Terminology and Presuppositions

The Fourth Evangelist takes up much of the same terminology as Philo does pertaining to the Word’s actions toward and among humanity.⁷² The Evangelist makes reference to ὁ Λόγος “coming into the world” (John 1:9), and later on Jesus characterizes that “coming” as κατέβασις (3:13; 6:33, 38–42, 50–51, 58). From this brief connection of Λόγος and κατέβασις, there exists already the possibility of “descent” referring to the coming of an adaptable soul-guide, as Philo so often depicted the “descent” of the Logos. Moreover, other references to Jesus’ “coming into the world” suggest a psychagogic aim: his coming is intended to “enlighten all humanity” (1:9), “to save the world” (3:17), to report

72 Again, this is not to suggest that the Fourth Evangelist read Philo or that one must posit some genetic relationship between the two authors. Rather, the suggestion is that only that by noting other similarities the two authors share regarding the common figure of the Logos one might, in reading John with Philo’s Logos in mind, see things not otherwise seen. Cf. Johannes Beutler, *Das Johannesevangelium: Kommentar* (Freiburg: Herder, 2013), 87.

what the Father has told him (8:26), and “to testify to the truth” (18:37). Taken together, these all point toward an understanding of the incarnation as educative, at least in part.⁷³ The educative aspect of these references will become clearer through a fuller description of the Evangelist’s presuppositions about the world in which the Word operates.

First, however, a few more terms bear noting, in addition to Λόγος and κατάβασις language, that the Evangelist shares with Philo in his portrayal of the Logos’ activity. The Evangelist, like Philo, relies upon an “above/below” division in the cosmos that makes κατάβασις an intelligible description of the actions of the Word:

ὁψεσθε τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεωγμένον καὶ τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναβαίνοντας καὶ καταβαίνοντας ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. (1:51)
 Ὁ ἄνωθεν ἐρχόμενος ἐπάνω πάντων ἐστίν (3:31)
 Ὑμεῖς ἐκ τῶν κάτω ἐστέ, ἐγὼ ἐκ τῶν ἄνω εἰμί. (8:23)⁷⁴

Verbal and conceptual parallels to Philo also come via descriptions of Jesus’ activity: similar to the Philonic Logos, Jesus engages in teaching (διδάσκειν, 6:59; 7:14, 28; 8:20, 28; 18:20), explaining (ἐξηγείσθε, 1:18), making known (γνωρίζω, 15:15; 17:26), guiding ([ἐξ]ἄγειν, 10:3, 16), healing/saving (σώζειν, 3:17; 10:9; 12:47), and illuminating (φαίνειν/φωτίζειν, 1:5, 9).

Terminology alone will not suffice to indicate the presence of the adaptability *topos* in the portrayal of the Johannine Jesus. As with Philo, presuppositions about God’s transcendence, character, and relation to the world further develop a framework that makes the adaptability of the Johannine Word both necessary and plausible. Moreover, the presuppositions of the Fourth Evangelist share striking similarities with those held by Philo, revolving around issues of divine-human relations, human access to knowledge of God/truth, humanity’s intended goal, and the order of the cosmos.

Firstly, the narrative of the Fourth Gospel unfolds in a cosmos wherein God remains beyond the grasp of human knowledge and perceptibility, as evidenced in 1:18a, 5:37, and 6:46a:

73 One can easily link instruction with the commonly recognized notion of revelation in John, the latter being intimately related to the descent; cf. Jean Zumstein, *L’évangile selon Saint Jean (1–12)* (CNT 1Va; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2014), 41.

74 In the above/below division, one of the Evangelist’s presuppositions about the world already makes itself known, i.e., the division of the cosmos into particular dualistic categories, as did Philo before him.

θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε (1:18a)⁷⁵
 οὔτε φωνήν αὐτοῦ πώποτε ἀκηκόατε οὔτε εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἑώρακατε (5:37)
 οὐχ ὅτι τὸν πατέρα ἑώρακέν τις εἰ μὴ ὁ ὢν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ (6:46a)

On its own, humanity seems incapable of discerning God's voice or image, and thus remains unable to perceive divine truth.⁷⁶ The inaccessibility of divine knowledge results in human ignorance of what God requires or how to relate to God (cf. 8:42–44), which results in the second presupposition, the separation of humanity from God and its consequent consignment to death. Thus, even the Jewish authorities, those presumed to have the most access to knowledge of divine things, remain hopelessly bereft of divine insight and are so fated for the same end as the most unlearned Gentile.⁷⁷

The fate of death for all humanity stands at odds, however, with God's aims for humanity. The Evangelist characterizes God's care and concern for all people most vividly in John 3:16: "For God so loved (ἡγάπησεν) the world, that he gave his only Son, that everyone who believes in him might not perish but may have eternal life."⁷⁸ The possession of eternal life sums up well what God wishes the world to possess. And, as 17:3 indicates, eternal life is commensurate with knowing God.⁷⁹ Thus, as in Philo, God desires that individuals possess not only knowledge of divine things, but also knowledge of God. In the Farewell Discourse, Jesus characterizes this intimate relationship as one of mutual indwelling (14:20, 23; 15:1–11), in which the disciples will abide (μένειν) in Jesus, who abides in the Father. This sort of intimate relationship between Creator and creature is the intended purpose of the human being, a purpose that God earnestly works to fulfill. In this way, Jesus will behave in a manner befitting the ideal pedagogue, who cares earnestly for the improvement of his pupils.⁸⁰

75 As Beutler notes (*Johannesevangeliums*, 96), even Moses is placed in the same position as the rest of humanity, because he did not truly see God.

76 Jesus' presence on earth will, however, mitigate somewhat this strict incapacity to access divine truth, resulting in a "soft dualism" that still divides the world into those who receive Jesus and those who reject him, but which nevertheless leaves room for the transfer of individuals from one category to the other; see 3:3, 7; 6:60–72; 8:23–26, 43–47; 12:44–50.

77 On the ignorance of the Jewish authorities (artfully characterized by the narrator), see, e.g., 2:16–22; 3:1–13; 5:39–47; 9:13–34, 39–41.

78 Zumstein, *Jean* (1–12), 41.

79 "This is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God. . . ." (17:3).

80 Cf. 1 John 4:9: "In this the love of God has been revealed among us, that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world (τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἀπέσταλκεν ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον) in order that we might live through him." Bultmann also notes on this passage from 1 John: "The sending of the Son is the deed of God's love. . . . The intent of this sending is therefore

Despite God's love for the world and the purpose of humanity, prior to the descent of the Word all the cosmos remains in a state of death. This pitiable condition comes about in large part because of the Evangelist's cosmology, which abounds in various dualisms. As noted earlier, the Evangelist characterizes his cosmos, like Philo's, as divided between above and below (ἄνω and κάτω).⁸¹ The above/below dualism in John serves as the dominant signifier for the difference between heaven and earth. In 1:51, Jesus makes reference to Gen. 28:12, saying that Nathanael would see "the angels of God ascending and descending (ἀναβαίνοντας καὶ καταβαίνοντας) upon the Son of Man."⁸² This above/below contrast comes most clearly in Jesus' debate with "the Jews" in John 8:12–59, in which Jesus asserts, "You are from *below*, but I am from *above*" (8:23).⁸³ Moreover, Jesus claims that he, and no one else, has come down from heaven:

οὐδεὶς ἀναβέβηκεν εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν εἰ μὴ ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς,
ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. (3:13)⁸⁴

fulfilled in those who believe in Jesus as the Son sent from God: they receive the love of God The fact that the love of God is the basis for the sending of the Son is expressed by the way in which *the purpose of his sending or coming* is given. He came into the world only 'to bear witness to the "truth"' (18:37), or, meaning the same thing, he came into the world as 'light,' in order 'that whoever believes in me may not remain in "darkness"' (12:46); *Theology*, 2.35–36.

- 81 For more on the cosmology of the Fourth Gospel in relation to its Christology, see Sjef van Tilborg, "Cosmological Implications of Johannine Christology," in *Theology and Christology in the Fourth Gospel: Essays by the Members of the SNTS Johannine Writings Seminar* (ed. G. van Belle, J.G. Van der Watt, and P.J. Maritz; BETL 184; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 483–502. Throughout his essay, van Tilborg highlights many of the same themes I will note here, especially Jesus' role as the one who brings heavenly knowledge to the world below.
- 82 In John, the scene from Genesis is used rather differently than in Philo. Rather than seeing the soul of the virtuous person as the ladder (à la Philo), the Evangelist makes Jesus, the Son of Man, the point of exchange between heaven and earth; cf. John Cochrane O'Neill, "Son of Man, Stone of Blood (John 1:51)," *NovT* 45 (2003): 374–381.
- 83 Von Wahlde notes on this verse: "Jesus alone has heard the voice of God and seen his form. But since Jesus has had direct experience of God and since he speaks what he heard and saw, the Jews do have the opportunity to be in contact with the word of God through Jesus" (Urban C. Von Wahlde, "The Witnesses to Jesus in John 5:31–40 and Belief in the Fourth Gospel," *CBQ* 43 [1981]: 342–43).
- 84 Many have seen this verse as being a part of the Son of Man Christology in John, or referring to the Johannine ascent-descent motif. This reading, however, is to ignore the verse's function in its context. Moloney makes the point nicely: "Jn 3:13 is not about pre-existence

The Evangelist makes frequent reference to Jesus' *κατάβασις* throughout the narrative, particularly in the dialogue with Nicodemus (3:1–21; cf. 31–36), as well as in the Bread of Life Discourse (6:22–59 [60–65]).⁸⁵ Once again, this descent only becomes intelligible in light of the Evangelist's dualistic cosmology.

The dualism does not appear only in cosmic terms, but similar divisions appear throughout the Gospel. Ashton writes, "The Fourth Gospel announces its dualism clearly and unequivocally from the very first page: 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not mastered it' (1:5). This light, already declared to be 'the life of men,' that is to say of the human race, continues to shine in spite of the futile attempts of the darkness to overcome it."⁸⁶ Light and darkness, above and below: these pairs have many siblings in the Gospel, such as knowledge and ignorance, love and hatred, freedom and slavery, spirit and flesh, life and death.⁸⁷ Importantly, prior to the descent of the Johannine Word, God remains "above," along with the good things of life, light,

or post-existence. One does not have to worry about its relationship with the reference to Jesus ascent to the Father in 20:17, because there is none. The words of Jesus . . . insist upon his uniqueness as the revelation of the heavenly"; Francis J. Moloney, "The Johannine Son of Man Revisited," in *The Gospel of John: Text and Context* (BibInt 72; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 192. Beyond this verse (and 1:51 mentioned above), the title "the Son of Man" lies outside the scope of this study. Moloney's essay, however, provides the reader with a relatively updated bibliography on the subject, as well as Moloney's own mature perspective on the title in the Fourth Gospel. For a different, no less mature view on this verse and the Son of Man notion in John, see John Ashton, "The Johannine Son of Man: A New Proposal," *NTS* 57 (2011): 508–529.

85 See van Tilborg, "Cosmological Implications," as he helpfully argues that Christology and cosmology—at least for the Fourth Evangelist—are two interconnected concepts, concepts that, as of his essay, had not been adequately addressed in concert. In making this point, he rightly notes that Adele Reinhartz (*The Word in the World: The Cosmological Tale in the Fourth Gospel* [SBLMS 45; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992]), failed to bring together cosmology and christology in a satisfying way.

86 John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (2nd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 387.

87 As in, e.g., 1:4–5, 12–13; 3:5–8, 12, 19–21, 31; 5:24, 29; 6:49–50; 7:7; 8:12, 23, 31–36, 51; 11:9–10, 25; 12:35–36; 15:18–19, 23. Cf. Brown, *John*, 1.lvii; Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 87–88; Zumstein, *Jean* (1–12), 43. To be sure, Philo is not the only pre-Christian Jewish text to espouse a kind of dualism that one also sees in the Fourth Gospel. Several interesting parallels exist between John and the Dead Sea Scrolls, though the exact nature between the two is as obscure as that between John and Philo. For a helpful introduction and comparison of the dualisms of DSS and John, see James H. Charlesworth, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gospel according to John," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith* (eds. R.A. Culpepper and C.C. Black; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 65–97.

and knowledge, while humanity remains bound to things below, including death and distance from God.⁸⁸ This dualism, in part at least, is suggestive of the same kind of Platonic dualism that one finds in Philo's works, as further evidenced by the frequent use of the terms ἀληθεία and ἀληθινός, as opposed to the "false" or "illusory" things that are mere reflections of divine reality.⁸⁹ Whatever the background of the ideas that nourish Johannine dualism,

88 There may be a parallel in John's Gospel to the ontic division one sees in Philo's works. Early on in the prologue, the Evangelist sets up the ontological distinction between Creator and creature through his use of two verbs of being: while the Logos "was" (ἦν), the creation "became" (ἐγένετο) (1:1–4). Consistently, at least until 1:14, the Evangelist utilizes the verb of *being*, εἶναι, to refer to the Logos and God only. The same can be said of the verb of *becoming*, γινέσθαι, which characteristically refers to the created world (the only possible exception being the variant in v. 3 referring to "life"). As in Philo, this terminology may evoke the distinction between that which is permanent and unchanging over against that which is evanescent and mutable. Throughout the narrative, moreover, Jesus' consistent use of the phrase ἐγώ εἰμι, a phrase almost universally recognized as an echo of Exod. 3:14, as assertions of his eternal being and status provide further credence to this way the Evangelist deploys these verbs in the prologue. John 8:58 serves as a prime example of this: Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, πρὶν Ἀβραάμ γινέσθαι ἐγώ εἰμι. The contrast of verbs in this verse is noted also by Brown, *John*, 1:360; Barrett, *St. John*, 282–83; Moloney, *John*, 271; Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 73; Zumstein, *Jean (1–12)*, 58. Nevertheless, space here does not allow me to explore the ontic categories of John's Gospel in the detail that this requires, and as such these observations are only suggestive.

89 Rainer Hirsch-Luipold, "Klartext in Bildern: ἀληθινός κτλ., παροιμία-παρρησία, σημεῖον als Signalwörter für eine bildhafte Darstellungsform im Johannesevangelium," in *Imagery in the Gospel of John: Terms, Forms, Themes, and Theology of Johannine Figurative Language* (eds. Jörg Frey, Jan G. van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann; WUNT 200; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 71–72. P. Borgen, however ("The Gospel of John and Hellenism: Some Observations," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith* [eds. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996], 112–116) argues that this dualism arises a) out of the Johannine community's sharp divide with the synagogue, and extrapolated to the cosmic dimension, and b) from engagement with Jewish scriptures and writings (as exemplified in the Dead Sea Scrolls). In contrast to Borgen's approach, J. Frey ("Licht aus den Höhlen? der 'johanneische Dualismus' und die Texte von Qumran," in *Kontexte des Johannesevangeliums: das vierte Evangelium in religions- und traditions-geschichtlicher Perspektive* [eds. Jörg Frey and Udo Schnelle; WUNT 175; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004], 170–171) opts for a more eclectic approach to the background and deployment of ideas in the Fourth Gospel. In this way, Frey can distinguish, even provisionally, between the light-dark opposition and the opposition between the Johannine community and the Jewish leaders. Thus, as Ashton (*Understanding*, 379) summarizes, it may be possible "that the Gospel's dualism may not function the same way throughout." In this way, one could posit the cosmic dualism as arising out of something like a framework of Middle Platonism, without having to superimpose this dualism on

however, the Evangelist makes clear that the Word's descent from heaven not only addresses the division in the cosmos, but also the many other dualisms that exist in the world prior to the incarnation.

All of these presuppositions of the Fourth Evangelist—God's transcendence and inaccessibility, the intended goal for humanity, God's care for the world, the divided cosmos, the many dualisms of the Johannine world, and the dismal fate of humanity apart from God—underwrite the rationale for the coming of the Word into the world.⁹⁰ Within this framework, a need emerges, as in Philo, for a divine agent to accommodate to humanity's need and to make possible a positive relationship between humanity and God.⁹¹ Furthermore, there is similarly a need for such an agent to enable individuals to enter into life "above," and to possess eternal life via intimacy with God. In other words, the problems presupposed in the Fourth Gospel can find their solution in the coming of an intermediary.

Kinds of Adaptability in the Fourth Gospel

The incarnation constitutes the act by which God, through Jesus, overcomes the divorce between the divine and human realms, thus making eternal life available to humanity. Moreover, the incarnation becomes in the Fourth Gospel the act of adaptability *par excellence* (without exhausting Jesus' methods of adaptability in John). Yet in the Word's becoming flesh (1:14), he engages in several *kinds* of adaptability at the same time, including cosmological, epistemological, perceptible, and corporeal ways of accommodating to humanity.

Like Philo's Logos, the most patent category of adaptable behavior is that of cosmic accommodation. The Evangelist refers to this motif often in the Bread

the divide between Jesus and "the Jews" within the Gospel, or the community and their opponents in the world behind the Gospel.

Importantly, two levels of dualism operating in John should be distinguished. The level that discussed here is the "vertical" level, in which the category of cosmic dualism, or even ontological and epistemological dualism would fall. Moreover, this vertical level of dualism operates at the level of presupposition. The other level, the horizontal, manifests itself primarily within the narrative, and may be categorized as, in Bultmann's words, a "dualism of decision" (*Entscheidungsdualismus*; Bultmann, *Theology*, 2.21.), or what Charlesworth calls an "essentially soteriological and ethical" dualism ("A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in 1QS III, 13-IV, 26 and the 'Dualism' Contained in the Fourth Gospel," *NTS* 15 [1969]: 409).

90 van Tilborg, "Cosmological Implications," 491–95.

91 On further similarities between the descending redeemer in Philo and in John, see Peder Borgen, "God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel," in *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough* (ed. Jacob Neusner; IRT 9; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968), 168.

of Life discourse (6:25–59), as Jesus reiterates several times that he is “the bread [of life] that has come down from heaven” (ὁ ἄρτος [ὁ ζῶν] ὁ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καταβάς) (6:33, 41, 50, 51, 58; cf. v. 38).⁹² Earlier on, in 3:31–32, it reads: “The one who comes from above (ἄνωθεν) is above all; the one who is from the earth is of the earth and speaks from an earthly perspective. The one who comes from heaven . . . testifies to what he has seen and heard.” This echoes the sentiment of 3:13, namely that what Jesus speaks has to do with events or truths that are only accessible to those who are from “above.”

The descent of the Word into the world comes not simply as an act of transition between the divided realms of the cosmos. Sent by God, Jesus’ incarnation arises out of a desire to draw individuals upward, to bring them into things above (cf. 3:3, 7). John Chrysostom indicates this, in reflecting on the aims of the incarnation:

In truth, to mingle the high with the low results in no harm to the honor of the high, but raises the lowly up from its very humble estate. Accordingly, this is also true in the case of Christ. He in no way lowered His own nature by this descent (καταβάσεως), but elevated us (ἀνήγαγεν), who had always been in a state of ignominy and darkness, to ineffable glory.⁹³

In other words, Jesus comes to enable persons to transcend the earthly and to have their very identity reoriented and reestablished to the realm “above.”⁹⁴ Jesus’ descent serves not only as a means of accommodating humanity’s current location in the realm below, but also creates an avenue by which individuals may enter into the world above, as indicated in Jesus’ promise to his disciples regarding his second “ascent” after his glorification: “In my Father’s house are many dwellings. . . . If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and I will take you to myself, so that where I am you might also be” (14:2–3).⁹⁵

Yet one cannot completely separate the cosmic from the cognitive kinds of adaptability. The statements made in 3:31–32 declare that in the descent of the Word, who has himself seen and witnessed things above, knowledge otherwise inaccessible to those who dwell below becomes available to any who would receive it. Moreover, Jesus’ teaching in the Fourth Gospel involves the disclosure

⁹² Meeks, “Man from Heaven,” 59.

⁹³ *Hom. Jo.* 11.1 (PG 59.79).

⁹⁴ Leander E. Keck, “Derivation as Destiny: ‘Of-ness’ in Johannine Christology, Anthropology, and Soteriology,” in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith* (eds. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 284.

⁹⁵ Barrett, *St. John*, 381–82.

of what Jesus calls “heavenly things,” (τὰ ἐπουράνια; 3:12). The incarnate Word also provides humanity with unprecedented knowledge of God’s being:

θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο. (1:18)⁹⁶

This knowledge that Jesus “explains” (ἐξηγήσατο) amounts to far more than trivialities or esoterica.⁹⁷ Rather, such knowledge of God and of things above has a strong soteriological aspect in the Fourth Gospel.⁹⁸ To “receive life” is to receive knowledge: “This is eternal life, that they know (γινώσκωσιν) you, the only true God, and he whom you sent, Jesus Christ” (17:3).⁹⁹ This is further affirmed by 6:68 and 8:32, in which *life* is closely associated to teaching and truth. The cognitive aspect of Jesus’ pedagogy becomes clear also in the many references to Jesus’ work as teacher: “My teaching is not mine but the one who sent me” (7:16) and “I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me” (8:28). Jesus’ identity as teacher (cf. 1:38; 3:2; 11:28; 13:13; 20:16) underscores the fact that he instructs people, guiding his audience to new knowledge and understanding of things “above.” In short, Jesus’ cosmic adaptability also entails a cognitive adaptability, resulting in salvation and eternal life (3:36).

Part of the reason that humanity cannot obtain knowledge of God or divine truths on their own arises from the imperceptibility of the world above. In the incarnation, however, Jesus makes manifest that which remains otherwise

96 Interestingly, here the Evangelist utilizes a phrase so weighty in Philo, ὁ ὢν. It is doubtful that the terminology here refers obliquely to divine existence (as in Philo’s “the One Who is”) due to the presence of a predicate (εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς). Such resonance is much more likely, though, in 8:53, though the characteristic Philonic phrase ὁ ὢν/τὸ ὢν is absent.

97 Zumstein, *Jean* (1–12), 68. On the connotations of the term ἐξηγεῖσθαι (here translated as “explained”), especially with respect to divine reality, see J.H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John* (ed. Alan Hugh McNeile; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1928), 1.33. also F. Büchsel, “ἡγεῖσθαι, ἐξηγεῖσθαι, κτλ” *TDNT* 2:907–908; “ἐξηγεῖσθαι,” *BDAG* 349.

98 J. Terence Forestell, *The Word of the Cross: Salvation as Revelation in the Fourth Gospel* (AnBib 57; Rome: Biblical Institute, 1974), 112–113.

99 Barrett: “Knowledge of God and Christ gives life; but the same result follows from believing (20:31). Knowing and believing are not set over against one another but correlated”; *St. John*, 420. Given the close connection between knowledge and faith, it is no surprise that scholars at one point saw a strong possibility for connections between John’s Gospel and Gnosticism.

hidden. Again, this idea is at play in 1:18, with its affirmation that no one has ever seen God.¹⁰⁰ The incarnation, by definition occurring in the flesh, makes up for humanity's lack of perception when it comes to things divine. As 1:14 states, "The Word became flesh, and we have *seen* (ἐθεασάμεθα) his glory," which indicates a degree of adaptability to the senses that would make Philo blush. That is, when the Logos appears in the world, it does so in a way appropriate to sense-perceptible creatures, however paradoxical that revelation may be.¹⁰¹ Origen writes of this very point: "For, perhaps, even if in some way we attain the most sublime and highest contemplation of the Word and of the truth, we shall not forget completely that we were introduced to him by his coming in our body."¹⁰² Moreover, it is only through the coming of the Word to his own that those who receive him are given "authority to become children of God" (1:12). The Evangelist also says, "grace and truth have come about through Jesus Christ," (1:17b) who is the Word incarnate.¹⁰³ This verse is immediately followed by the Evangelist's claim that "no one has ever seen God, but the only-begotten God . . . has explained him," which is itself an implicit assertion that the coming of the Son to humanity involves making knowable the unknowable God (at least in part).¹⁰⁴ Jesus declares, in words quite plain for all to hear, things he alone has seen and heard (3:32), to make known the God whose "voice you have never heard" and whose "form you have never seen" (5:37).¹⁰⁵ Appealing to humanity's need for things perceptible, the Son in his

100 Cf. Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 74: "Ja, wenn überhaupt erst das *Sprechen* Jesu Christi und Jesus Christus als dieses *Sprechen* (ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο) die Möglichkeit erschlossen hat, das Unsagbare zu sagen (1,18), dann muß der gesamte Prolog von seinem ersten Vers an als *Preisgedicht* auf den Fleischgewordenen und nicht etwa als die *Erzählung* der Vorgeschichte dieser Fleischwerdung gelesen werden" (emphasis original).

101 Ibid., 92. See also Zumstein, *Jean* (1–12), 65: "L'incarnation est présentée au v. 14c comme révélation, plus précisément comme manifestation de la gloire. Le regard qui contemple la gloire du Logos nest cependant pas un voir objectif, mais le regard confessant de la foi . . . Cette gloire accessible à la foi ne se manifeste pas à côté de la chair, malgré la chair ou encore à travers la chair, mais dans la chair."

102 *Comm. Jo.* 2.61 (Heine, FC).

103 Tobin lifts out 1:12, 14 in particular as verses that point to the Johannine Word's anagogical function, by which the Word elevates humanity into a new realm of existence as children of God; "Prologue," 261.

104 See Marianne Meye Thompson, "'God's Voice You Have Never Heard, God's Form You Have Never Seen': The Characterization of God in the Gospel of John," *Semeia* 63 (1993): 177–204.

105 For more on the "vision/perception of God" in John, see both Von Wahlde, "Witnesses"; Thompson, "'God's Voice.'"

κατάβασις assumes flesh in order to make the unseen God manifest (cf. 14:7–9). This would indeed seem like an act of adaptability, and understood in this way, the Son's κατάβασις involves not only cosmic, but also cognitive adaptability, all with a salvific end in mind.¹⁰⁶

The Johannine Jesus also engages in guiding people with respect to morality. He offers people not only knowledge of God and a perception of the divine, but he also offers guidance pertaining to how people should conduct their lives. The Johannine Jesus is notoriously reserved with regard to ethics when compared to the Synoptic Jesus, to be sure, but he nevertheless offers some measure of ethical instruction.¹⁰⁷ The most obvious examples are the command to reenact the footwashing and the related love commandment (13:13–14, 34–35), and interpreters have too often seen these as the sole instances of ethical commands in the Gospel.¹⁰⁸ Yet the Johannine Jesus also provides moral guidance when, for example, he decries the murderous intentions of his opponents, calling them to “judge with right judgment” (7:24; cf. vv. 19–25). Such guidance he also gives, however harshly, when he once again points out his antagonists’ attempts to kill him, a man who has spoken the truth from God (8:39–40; cf. 44–47). Finally, in the Gospel’s epilogue, Jesus gives a symbolic, yet no less direct ethical command to Peter: “Feed/tend my sheep/lambs” (21:15–17), which entails guiding those who are Jesus’ own. The Johannine Logos comes down, then, not only to give life and to save, but also to guide people in their way of life (cf. 10:1–18; 14:6).¹⁰⁹ So, even though there is not anything approaching the

106 Barrett notes, however, that Jesus’ perceptibility is akin to the signs: it might provide the entry to faith, but apart from a changed perception, one cannot see who Jesus truly is; C.K. Barrett, “Christocentric or Theocentric? Observations on the Theological Method of St. John,” in *Essays on John* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 7–8.

107 For an overview of the question regarding Johannine ethics, see Jan G. van der Watt, “Ethics and Ethos in the Gospel according to John,” *ZNW* 97 (2006): 147–149. Nevertheless, recent trends in Johannine scholarship indicate a move away from this negative understanding of Johannine ethics and toward a position that evaluates the positive place of ethics in the Fourth Gospel, as evidenced by the recent collection of essays on Johannine ethics: Jan G. Van Der Watt and Ruben Zimmerman, eds., *Rethinking the Ethics of John: “Implicit Ethics” in the Johannine Writings. Kontexte und Normen neutestamentler Ethik/Contexts and Norms of New Testament Ethics, Vol. 3* (WUNT 291; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012).

108 See the discussion in Michael Labahn, “‘It’s Only Love’—Is That All? Limits and Potentials of Johannine ‘Ethic’—A Critical Evaluation of Research,” and Ruben Zimmerman, “Is There Ethics in John? Challenging an Outdated Consensus,” in *Rethinking the Ethics of John*, 3–43, 44–80.

109 Though, as Bultmann notes, Jesus is not merely the way or the guide in the sense that he “mediated access and then became superfluous. . . . On the contrary, he is the way in such a manner as to be at the same time the goal; for he is also ἡ ἀλήθεια καὶ ἡ ζωὴ: the ἀλήθεια

Sermon on the Mount in John, the Johannine Jesus does guide with respect to people's behavior, in addition to his guidance in the cosmic, cognitive, and perceptive aspects of human life.¹¹⁰

Pedagogical Methods of the Johannine Jesus

The Johannine Jesus possesses many of the key traits required for one engaged in adaptable pedagogy: Being himself divine (1:1–2) and intimately associated with God, he has both authority and moral integrity, not to mention the knowledge shared by God.¹¹¹ As the creator of humanity, furthermore, he possesses the requisite knowledge of humanity's ills from which he will save them. Jesus also shares the Father's concern for the improvement of humanity, and acts out of compassion to save the world. In view of these characteristics, then, the Johannine Jesus' *capacity* to engage in adaptable pedagogy becomes clear. I have even shown the various kinds of adaptability in which he engages. Yet Jesus' psychagogy is most apparent in the specific ways in which he engages with those whom he seeks to improve. Philo's Logos utilized a variety of methods to instruct humanity toward this end; John's Word, too, makes use of a similar array of instructive tools, including concessions, signs, examples, teaching by degrees, and using both harsh and gentle words.¹¹²

as the *revealed* reality of God, and the ζῶή as the *divine* reality which bestows life on the believer"; *John*, 605–606.

- 110 An additional connection between Johannine ethics and the role of the Logos may be the frequently cited connection between Logos and Sophia, the latter (following the Wisdom Tradition) conveying significant moral insight to humanity. See Andrew T. Glicksman, "Beyond Sophia: The Sapiential Portrayal of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel and Its Ethical Implications for the Johannine Community," in *Rethinking the Ethics of John*, 83–101.
- 111 Jesus' knowledge in the Gospel narrative frequently looks similar to divine knowledge, an understanding of all things. A relatively recent treatment of Jesus' knowledge/omniscience is Kasper Bro Larsen, "Narrative Docetism: Christology and Storytelling in the Gospel of John," in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology* (eds. Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 346–355.
- 112 In the comparison with Philo, however, John offers more varied evidence for the methods of Jesus' adaptable pedagogy, since his narrative focuses almost exclusively on the career of the incarnate Word. Thus, while Philo's Logos and John's Jesus both employ similar methods of pedagogical activity, those of Jesus have greater breadth, encompassing more of the pedagogical methods of discussed in the previous chapter. Some of this arises, no doubt, from the differences in genre: the Johannine Jesus, existing within a narrative, can speak directly and with various characters. Meanwhile, the Philonic Logos, appearing according to the exegetical needs of the author as he encounters various Pentateuchal texts, is characterized only through secondhand description, and disappears until Philo has further interpretive use for the concept.

Not every character in the Fourth Gospel looks the same, and some appear almost as polar opposites (e.g., Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman). Jesus recognizes this, and often alters both the content of his teaching and the method of his guidance to the individuality of his interlocutors. A good example of this is Jesus' encounters with Martha and Mary: Martha conveys her inner life through speech, and Jesus responds with words to comfort her (11:21–27). With Mary, however, Jesus says nothing, but responds to her *weeping* in kind, with weeping of his own (vv. 32–35).¹¹³ Contrary to the opinions of several interpreters, nowhere does the Evangelist offer a clear indication that Martha or Mary offered the “better” response to Jesus,¹¹⁴ but he does offer evidence that Jesus responds somewhat empathetically to both, comforting each sister in the way that she required.¹¹⁵

Jesus adapts as well to the particular time and place in which he teaches. For example, in the narrative interlude in John 4:31–38, Jesus takes advantage both of the specific concerns of the disciples at the moment (Jesus' food) and turns the dialogue about acquiring food to reaping produce, which directs the disciples' attention to the coming harvest, i.e., the “fruit” of the Samaritans (4:39–42). A similar scene unfolds in 6:25–59, and Jesus again turns the discussion away from momentary satiety to “food that endures to eternal life”

113 Cornelis Bennema (*Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* [2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014], 267–69) notes the differences between the sisters, but this leads him to say nearly nothing about how Jesus interacts with each. If anything, this oversight only emphasizes the need for further exploration of Jesus' teaching and character.

114 In this I concur with Ingrid R. Kitzberger, “Mary of Bethany and Mary of Magdala—Two Female Characters in the Johannine Passion Narrative: A Feminist, Narrative-Critical Reader-Response,” *NTS* 41 (1995): 578, and Susan Hylen, *Imperfect Believers: Ambiguous Characters in the Gospel of John* (Westminster John Knox, 2009), 78, contra the positions of, e.g., Mark W.G. Stibbe, “A Tomb with a View: John 11:1–44 in Narrative-Critical Perspective,” *NTS* 40 (1994): 46–47; Wendy E. Sproston North, *The Lazarus Story Within the Johannine Tradition* (JSNTSup 212; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 143; or Craig R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 66. Kitzberger and Hylen both see no compelling reason to pit the responses of the two women against one another, opting for one as more adequate than the other. While a case could be made for several characters in the Gospel with respect to the adequacy of their response to Jesus, the sisters of Bethany simply appear too briefly in the narrative for to accrue enough evidence for a compelling argument. At any rate, it is difficult to say that the Evangelist *condemns* either sister for their responses.

115 See the fuller discussion on these two women in Chapter 4.

(vv. 26–27). In this way, he adapts his teaching specifically to the concerns of the crowd before him, tailoring his instruction to the present situation.¹¹⁶

The Johannine Jesus makes numerous uses of concessions, that is, saying or doing something strictly unnecessary or even detracting to his reputation, but which holds some psychagogical purpose. For example, at Lazarus's tomb, Jesus prays aloud "Father, I thank you that you hear me. I know that you always hear me, but for the sake of the crowd standing around I said this, in order that they might believe that you sent me (ἵνα πιστεύσωσιν ὅτι σύ με ἀπέστειλας)" (11:41–42).¹¹⁷ A similar event unfolds in 12:27–30 with respect to the voice from heaven. Jesus also appeals to Moses and the scriptures, not because his authority is derived from theirs, but because "they testify on my behalf," (5:39; cf. v. 46). Even Jesus' lofty statements about his identity come couched in concessions: throughout the Gospel, Jesus makes several forthright assertions about his identity, but these typically come in the context of otherwise "lowly" speeches regarding Jesus' dependence on the Father (e.g., 5:26–27; 10:30; 12:44; 14:6).¹¹⁸ This tactic, as Chrysostom argues, starts with ideas that

116 This particular way of discussing this scene raises the question of the Gospel's composition. It is most plausible that the scene does not represent a historical occurrence, but was the fabrication of the Evangelist, or of some tradition predating the Gospel and its narrative. Thus, the Evangelist likely had in mind the various points of this discourse prior to situating the scene within the context of the feeding of the five thousand, but found that setting to be amenable to the discourse itself. Nevertheless, *within the narrative itself* it cannot be denied that Jesus does, in fact, accommodate his discourse quite well to the situation described in the verses prior to it.

117 Many commentators, such as Bultmann (*John*, 408–409), Barrett (*St. John*, 336), and Moloney (*John*, 332–33) have recognized the pedagogical purpose of this prayer, yet have not read this passage as indicating the underlying *topos* of adaptability. One of the first commentators on John, however, did consider this to be a manifestation of psychagogy. Origen writes: "Therefore, he was about to pray about the resurrection of Lazarus when the only good God and Father anticipated his prayer and heard the words about to be spoken in his prayer. The Savior offers up thanksgiving for these things in place of prayer in the hearing of the crowd that stood around him. He was doing two things at the same time. He was giving thanks for the things he had obtained concerning Lazarus, and establishing faith in the crowd that stood around him, for he wished to receive them, since this was why he had been sent from God and had sojourned in life" (*Comm. Jo.* 28.42 [Heine, FC]).

118 In each of these instances, one sees a reflection of one pole of the Gospel's dialectical thought; cf. C.K. Barrett, "The Dialectical Theology of St. John," in *New Testament Essays* (London: S.P.C.K., 1972), 49–69; and idem "Christocentric or Theocentric? Observations on the Theological Method of St. John," in *Essays on John* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 1–18. The other pole is that already identified above, as in 14:6, in that the Johannine

are more readily accepted, and uses those ideas as a starting point to arrive at more sublime truths:

Therefore, sublime and great utterances from His lips are few, and these, obscure; while humble and ordinary ones are many, and are interspersed in His words in abundance. Since people were attracted more strongly by the latter, He used them frequently. He did not utter the lofty ones exclusively, lest His hearers might be intimidated by them, nor did He refrain altogether from them, lest the people of His day might in that case be disedified.¹¹⁹

Every concession the Johannine Jesus makes, he makes not to demonstrate his own glory, but (to the contrary) to draw his hearers to salvation.

Jesus' use of concession ties in with yet another tool of adaptable pedagogy: corporeal signs (σημεῖα and ἔργα, another topic Jesus brings up in 5:19–47). In 10:38, Jesus tells the crowd: “Even if you do not believe in me, believe in the works, in order that you might know that the Father is in me and that I am in the Father.”¹²⁰ Jesus performed numerous works (ἔργα), famously referred to as “signs” (σημεῖα), and these can also be understood within the realm of psychagogical methods (though they are by no means *exclusively* psychagogical tools).¹²¹ Notably, Jesus' first miracle of turning water to wine points to Jesus' glory, which in turn creates an invitation for his disciples to believe: “This was the first of the signs Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee, and he manifested his glory, *and his disciples believed in him.*” (2:11).¹²² Other miracles Jesus

Jesus makes the most sense “when in hearing him you hear the Father, when in looking at him you see the Father, and worship him” (Barrett, “Christocentric,” 16). That is, John's aim in writing the Gospel is to produce faith in *Jesus* (20:30–31) not simply as God's agent of salvation, but as one believed to be coequal with God (cf. 10:30).

119 John Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 64.4 (PG 59.353); cf. also *Hom. Jo.* 38.4 (PG 59.217); 39.2 (PG 59.222); 46.2 (PG 59.259).

120 See also 14:11.

121 The role of the σημεῖα in John is widely debated, whether they possess positive or negative value in the Gospel. Nevertheless, Parsenios provides an inventive and persuasive lens through which to view the signs, and does so in a way that recognizes both the Evangelist's simultaneous positive and negative assessment of signs; George L. Parsenios, *Rhetoric and Drama in the Johannine Lawsuit Motif* (WUNT 258; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 121–128.

122 Brown: “the first sign had the same purpose that all the subsequent signs will have, namely, *revelation about the person of Jesus*. Scholarly interpretations to the contrary, John does not put *primary* emphasis on the replacing of the water for Jewish purifications, nor on the action of changing water to wine (which is not described in detail, nor even on the

performs also serve as indicators, pointers toward a greater reality. When Jesus feeds the five thousand, it underwrites his later claims that he is the one who has come down (ὁ καταβαίνων) from heaven as the bread of life (6:33). The miracle of Lazarus's resurrection puts a sharp point on Jesus' earlier proclamation, ἐγώ εἰμι ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωὴ (11:25). Ideally, the signs provide a perceptible, corporeal starting point from which people may begin to understand Jesus' identity and recognize his glory.

The Johannine signs do what all signs do: they *signify* something other (if not greater) than the sign itself. The signs carry a persuasive function with respect to the Gospel as a whole, as summarized in 20:30–31.¹²³ That is, corporeal signs (or “evidence”) point toward the incorporeal truth about Jesus' identity and mission, truth apprehended adequately only by means of faith. Within the narrative itself, signs do often lead to faith—though by no means always. This tension manifests itself at the narrative level in the lack of faith and understanding in the disciples, Nicodemus, the Jewish leaders, and the crowds. Nevertheless, signs do hold a positive place within the Evangelist's narrative. As Parsenios puts it, “To call the signs evidence . . . is not in any way to suggest that this makes the question of faith easy or obvious. The signs are revealed as evidence in a situation in which every moment of revelation is equally a moment of concealment.”¹²⁴ Signs do not consistently lead to the birth of understanding or belief.¹²⁵ Signs can and do, however, provide people with an opportunity to *begin* to understand, as is evidenced both by the crowds (6:2) and Nicodemus, who asserts: “No one could do these signs you do unless God is with him” (3:2).¹²⁶

resultant wine . . .). The primary focus is, as in all Johannine stories, on Jesus as the one sent by the Father to bring salvation to the world. What shines through is *his glory*, and the only reaction that is emphasized is the *belief* of the disciples”; *John*, 1.103–104 (emphasis original).

123 Whether the signs derive more from a background of rhetoric or from the motif of anagnorisis, there need not be a distinction made, since “both [rhetoric and recognition] intend to persuade and to lead from ignorance to knowledge”; Parsenios, *Rhetoric and Drama*, 97.

124 *Ibid.*, 127–128.

125 See, for example, the many disciples who desert Jesus shortly after the Bread of Life discourse (6:60–66).

126 And, as Koester puts it, “faith is the context in which understanding develops”; Craig R. Koester, *The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008), 172. Cf. also Moloney, *John*, 195; D. Moody Smith, *John* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 94.

An offshoot of corporeal signs is the corporeal imagery that Jesus uses in his teaching. Several of the famous predicated “I am” statements of the Fourth Gospel rely upon material, even mundane images to indicate Jesus’ significance. Bread of life, light of the world, sheep gate, good shepherd, true vine: all of these draw upon common images to those living in the Palestine of Jesus’ day (and indeed throughout the Mediterranean region and beyond). Each of these reveals an aspect of Jesus’ identity and role in the divine economy, and does so in ways far more effective than “simple” language (i.e., without imagery).¹²⁷ Jesus also makes use of further metaphors and images to aid his teaching, as in the discourse regarding the harvest in 4:31–38, not to mention the complicated, if not somewhat confusing collection of images that Jesus brings together in the Shepherd Discourse (10:1–18).

Even the mixing of metaphors can itself serve as a means for instruction: irony, ambiguity, and riddles may function in the same way as way to provoke his audience to inquire further, which can turn listeners into self-teachers.¹²⁸ Here, Barrett’s recognition of the Gospel’s dialectical theology reinforces this point.¹²⁹ The truth is not, strictly speaking, that Jesus is (for example) either the “door” or the “shepherd,” but he utilizes the metaphors to capture key facets of his identity.¹³⁰ Both metaphors capture only an element of who he is—both shepherd and door, or neither—, and while this requires a distortion of the metaphorical logic, it nevertheless uses these apprehensible concepts to guide hearers to a truer understanding of a higher reality. The ironic use of metaphors, too, as in the “born again/from above” distinction in 3:3, 5 can provoke a question in the hearer, who may then proceed to comprehend the spiritual truth behind the metaphor from the earthly realm.¹³¹

As noted in the previous chapter, an adaptable teacher often depended on the metaphorical symbol *par excellence*: his own example. Individual signs and experiences might offer temporary avenues for understanding and growth, but the entire life of the teacher would offer to students a concrete model for action

127 The distinction between “simple” and image-laden language is something of a heuristic division of language, since, as demonstrated in the landmark work by Lakoff and Johnson, all of human language is saturated with metaphorical language, whether a communicator intends the metaphor or not; George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (2nd ed.; Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2003).

128 See discussion on pp. 33–34, above; cf. Theophrastus, *On Style*, in Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric*, 85.

129 Barrett, “Dialectical Theology of St. John.”

130 Similarly, Jesus is not strictly flesh or the divine Logos, but he is both without dissolution of the other.

131 See discussion in Chapter 3.

and virtue. John emphasizes Jesus' own exemplary actions at what some might consider the nadir of the Son's *κατάβασις*, the washing of the disciples' feet (13:1–11).¹³² After resuming his seat at the table (13:12), Jesus tells his disciples:

You call me “Teacher” and “Lord,” and rightly so, for that I am. Therefore, if I, the Teacher and the Lord have washed your feet, then you, too, should wash one another's feet. For I have given to you an example (*ὑπόδειγμα*),¹³³ in order that just as I have done for you, so also you might do. (13:13–15)¹³⁴

Mutual, humble service for others does not exhaust the example Jesus gives. As Jesus was sent from the Father, so they are sent (17:18); as he has performed works that point toward God, so they too will do great works (14:12). Ultimately, though, the primary way in which Jesus offers an example to his disciples, one that would sum up his teaching and actions, is the model of his love for them (a love indicated in the footwashing).¹³⁵ He tells them, “Just as I have loved you, so also you should love one another. In this, all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (13:34–35). The primary evidence of who Jesus' followers are comes not through miraculous signs or even their expressions of faith, but in the way their love resembles Jesus' own.¹³⁶

132 In the Synoptics, the “low point” would almost certainly be the crucifixion, but in the Fourth Gospel the depiction of Jesus' death is so intertwined with the language of glory and exaltation that the crucifixion becomes the apex of Jesus' earthly manifestation of glory. At any rate, the footwashing and the crucifixion cannot be divorced, as they both appear symbolically linked in John's narrative (compare 10:18 and 13:34; also 13:14–15 and 13:34).

133 From “ὑπόδειγμα,” *BDAG* 1037: “an example of behavior used for purposes of moral instruction, *example, model, pattern* . . . ; in a good sense as something that does or should spur one on to imitate it. . . .” The term also appears in Philo, esp. in *Rer.* 256 and *Post.* 122, with similar notions of a moral model.

134 Thyen (*Johannesevangelium*, 590) refers to the footwashing as a *σημεῖον par excellence*.

135 Moreover, the act of “laying down” (τίθηναι) his outer garment and “taking up” (λαμβάνειν) the towel recalls 10:18, so further connecting the idea of laying down one's life to the act of footwashing; cf. R. Alan Culpepper, “The Johannine Hypodeigma: A Reading of John 13,” *Semeia*, 53 (1991): 137.

136 Origen writes: “[T]his is the goal of the teacher, *qua* teacher, for the disciple: to make the disciple as himself, that he may no longer need the teacher, *qua* teacher, although he will need him in other respects. For as the goal of the physician, whom the sick need, but the well have no need of a physician, is to stop the sick from being sick so that they no longer need him, so the goal of the teacher is to achieve for his disciple that which is called ‘sufficient’ in the statement, ‘It is sufficient for the disciple that he be as his teacher.’ [Matt. 10.25]” (*Comm. Jo.* 32.18 [Heine, FC]).

Jesus' love, whether for his disciples or for the world in general, does not prevent him in his teaching from utilizing the "now the curb, now the spur," as Seneca put it, i.e., the mixed method.¹³⁷ For example, when the crowds follow him to Capernaum, Jesus responds rather harshly: "Truly, I tell you: you seek me not because you saw signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Work not for the food that perishes, but for the food that remains unto eternal life" (6:26–27). This, and much of the following discourse, comes across to many interpreters as combative and confrontational, and so it did to Chrysostom: "Kindness and gentleness are not helpful on all occasions, but there is a time when the teacher has need of greater severity. When the pupil is lazy and phlegmatic, it is necessary to use a goad to prod such great sluggishness. This even the Son of God has done time and again, and especially in today's text [i.e., 6:26–27]."¹³⁸ Later, though, in 7:37–38 and 8:12, Jesus offers invitations for people to follow him, sounding much more like "gentle Jesus, meek and mild" than the firm, if not offensive Jesus of 6:25–59. Jesus' tone, whether confrontational or inviting, would seem to change according to the circumstances and according to his audience. Such alterations may reasonably be considered as signs of psychagogical adaptability. In each instance, Jesus uses the "mixed method" to conduct people to the path of understanding and faith, at one time prodding and at another time luring people to adopt a new perspective.

The "mixed method" of gentle and harsh instruction has a sibling, so to speak: that of the provocative comment. Such provocation tends to create what cognitive psychologists refer to as "cognitive disequilibrium," though this modern term describes an ancient phenomenon.¹³⁹ An adaptable teacher might raise a question simply to challenge his students' assumptions about the world, and in several instances, Jesus makes simple assertions that have such an effect.¹⁴⁰ Chrysostom comments on this, saying: "Now, it was for this

¹³⁷ *Ira* 2.21.3.

¹³⁸ *Hom. Jo.* 44.2 (PG 59.247).

¹³⁹ This term was coined by Jean Piaget, and outlined especially in his *The Equilibration of Cognitive Structures: The Central Problem of Intellectual Development* (trans. Terrance Brown and Kishore Julian Thampy; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985). A great many interpreters of John have labeled such instances of "disequilibrium" as "Johannine misunderstandings." However, if John's Jesus is not solely intent on baffling his interlocutors or his disciples (as some may claim), then one might ask whether there is some rationale behind all of this cognitive dissonance introduced by the Johannine Word. Raymond Brown seems to get at this very idea: "These misunderstandings—a frequent device in the Johannine discourse—lead Jesus to explain more fully"; *John*, 1.138.

¹⁴⁰ As indicated by Forestell, *The Word of the Cross*, 14.

reason that Christ often spoke obscurely, because He wished to make His hearers more inclined to ask questions and to cause them to be more attentive. What has been said with its meaning obvious often escapes the listener, but what has been said obscurely makes him more curious and eager.”¹⁴¹ For example, in John 5, after the healing of the paralytic, Jesus baldly and cryptically claims: “My Father is still working, and I also am working” (5:17). This leads the Jewish leaders to attempt to kill him as a way of responding to the disequilibrium Jesus has introduced (5:18). Though, as the healing of the blind man reveals, Jesus’ provocation does not always lead inexorably (or solely) to death threats. When Jesus says, “I came into this world for judgment, in order that those who do not see might see, and those who see might become blind,” the Pharisees ask: “We are not blind, are we?” (9:39–40). At this question, Jesus launches into his parable of the sheep (after responding to the Pharisees not so subtly), suggesting that his comment in v. 39 created a suitable moment for teaching.¹⁴² In still other instances, Jesus populates his entire discourse with such provocative statements, especially in 6:25–59 and 8:12–59. Statements like “I am the bread that came down from heaven” (6:35, 38) and “Whoever keeps my word will never taste death” (8:51) both upset and upturn his interlocutors’ assumptions, demanding either stubborn adherence to their worldviews or a radical reorientation of perspective (which the Evangelist calls “faith”). Thus, even though many in John’s narrative remain entrenched in their views, some do believe and follow, overcoming the offense of his provocation (cf. 6:60–69).

The Johannine Jesus encounters several individuals in the course of his ministry, and with some he either engages repeatedly (e.g., “the Jews,” the disciples) or, while only once, does so extensively (such as Nicodemus or the Samaritan woman). In these longer interactions, Jesus does not talk to his interlocutors as if they never progress (or digress) in understanding, but teaches them by degrees. This point will come into much greater focus in the next chapter, as I discuss John 3–4 and Jesus’ dialogues with both Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. Nevertheless, the Gospel contains several characters whose understanding Jesus tries to advance over time. For instance, after his meeting with Nathanael and Nathanael’s subsequent confession about Jesus’ identity (1:49), Jesus responds: “Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these.” In this way, Jesus already

¹⁴¹ *Hom. Jo.* 24.2 (PG 59.146).

¹⁴² The first few lines of the discourse, however, do not result immediately in clarity, but further confusion, as the Evangelist comments in 10:6, “Jesus spoke this riddle/parable (παροιμία) to them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.” Thus, Jesus takes the opportunity to explain further, starting in 10:7.

tries to advance Nathanael's understanding of Jesus as the fulfillment of his messianic hopes, to help him recognize that in Jesus, earth and heaven are joined.¹⁴³

Throughout his ministry, too, the disciples reflect a lack of understanding about what they see. Yet the disciples would later remember—via the Paraclete, whose work extends Jesus' after the ascension (14:26; see below)—several things that they had not initially understood (2:17, 22; 12:16; 13:7). After the resurrection, then, the disciples would be able to recall such things in a new light, with a better understanding of Jesus' significance and identity. Furthermore, among the disciples, there is particular growth in understanding on the part of Peter, whom Jesus slowly guides over time to be the next “shepherd of the sheep”—or at least *one* of them—who would be willing to lay down his life both for Jesus and for the sheep (21:18–19).¹⁴⁴

In teaching by degrees over time, often a guide will return to previous themes or ideas in order either to reaffirm them, to ensure that the pupils have understood the point, or to expand upon them. In his dialogue with Martha (11:21–27), Jesus continually refers, however obscurely, to the miracle he is about to perform in the raising of Lazarus. Martha shows something resembling faith in Jesus and his miraculous powers (v. 21), but still seems to fall short.¹⁴⁵ This is made clear once Jesus, at the tomb, has asked for the stone to be removed. Martha objects, but Jesus repeats his earlier point with more clarity: “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” (v. 40).¹⁴⁶ The repetition serves, then, to help Martha reassess the content of the initial discussion with Jesus, and, ideally, helps her appreciate the depth of Jesus' identity as “the resurrection and the life” (v. 25). In 15:20, Jesus repeats the saying, “Servants are not greater than their master,” which he initially uttered in 13:16 at the footwashing. There, the point was that if Jesus humbled himself in the act, so also should they. Yet in the new context, Jesus adds another layer of meaning to the maxim: not only should they act as he has, but they should

143 Smith (*John*, 77) writes: “Jesus' response (v. 50) suggests a certain inadequacy or incompleteness in Nathanael's confession, fulsome as it seems.” That is, Nathanael has more to understand, even if his words are more or less accurate; cf. also Moloney, *John*, 56.

144 Peter's character will be discussed more fully in Chapter 6 below.

145 Mary, too, does not fully grasp Jesus' power and authority, although he guides her in a different way. Cf. the discussion in Chapter 4.

146 Of course, Jesus had not said this in so many words during his first dialogue with Martha. Nevertheless, Jesus indicates that the concept to which he refers in 11:40 is the same that guided the dialogue in vv. 21–27.

also expect to be received as well as he did, and should expect persecution and hatred from the world (15:19–21).

Individually, none of these particular methods would stand out as the mark of an adaptable guide. Yet, when taken together with the Evangelist's presuppositions and in recognition of the kinds of adaptability in which the Johannine Jesus engages, in each of these various techniques for interacting with other characters Jesus' pedagogical method becomes recognizable. Moreover, in light of the strong similarities between the depictions of the descent of the Philonic Logos and the Johannine Word with respect to adaptable psychagogy, the idea that the Johannine Jesus displays an eminently adaptable character becomes even more plausible. Yet a practical interpretive question arises: does the category of adaptability do more for exegesis than simply adding another layer of characterization to John's Jesus?

Windows into Johannine Adaptability

A few examples here will illustrate the utility of the adaptability *topos* in making sense out of the Fourth Gospel. In several passages, one finds otherwise competent—indeed, some of them brilliant—interpreters of John either groping for answers to exegetical conundrums or even bypassing the difficulties altogether. Yet in these instances, the ancient concept of adaptability casts new light on the passages, and gives more coherence to Jesus' actions throughout the Gospel.

The Role of John the Baptist

The interrelationship between Jesus and John the Baptist stretches back so deep in Christian tradition that no canonical Gospel omits the Baptist as a precursor to Jesus. Yet his role in the Fourth Gospel is distinctively different from what it is in the Synoptics, which is made evident by his introduction: "There was a man sent by God . . . who came for testimony, to testify about the light, in order that all might believe through him" (1:6–7).¹⁴⁷ In the Fourth Gospel alone is the Baptist characterized as an agent sent to testify and to nurture faith in "all." Yet many scholars are content merely to follow the Evangelist in presuming that the Baptist's witness somehow connects with faith.¹⁴⁸ Yet adaptability

¹⁴⁷ As Bennema (*Encountering Jesus*, 61) notes, John's characterization is almost stripped down to the single trait of witnessing.

¹⁴⁸ E.g., Bultmann, *John*, 264–65; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Truth on Trial: The Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2000), 78; Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 62–72.

raises the question: how exactly does the Baptist's testimony actually bring about faith?

Jesus' own testimony provides the answer. Earlier, in his first dialogue with the Pharisees, Jesus calls to mind the testimony of John (5:33–36), and notes that John did not come for Jesus' sake, but for *theirs*, in order that they might be saved (v. 34).¹⁴⁹ Indeed, John Chrysostom indicates that John's role in the Gospel is fundamentally that of a *concession* to Jesus' audience. As Jesus claims in the Gospel, he needs no one's testimony (e.g., 2:25; 5:34; 8:14). In the discourse arising out of the Sabbath healing of the paralytic (5:19–47), however, Jesus brings forward the witness of John the Baptist. Chrysostom expands upon the scene:

He did not say, "John has borne witness to Me," but first He said: "You have sent to John—and you would not have sent to him, if you did not consider him trustworthy (ἄξιόπιστον)." More than this: they did not send to him to inquire about Christ, but about himself. And if they considered that he was to be believed in matters pertaining to himself, much more would they think this in those pertaining to another. We are, to be sure, so constituted by nature that all say that they do not believe people when they are speaking about themselves as they do those speaking about others. Yet they considered this man so trustworthy that they did not need any other witness even in regard to matters pertaining to himself.¹⁵⁰

Jesus makes it quite clear why he refers his audience to John: not for himself, but ταῦτα λέγω ἵνα ὑμεῖς σωθῆτε (5:34). That is, he explicitly references the testimony of John so that his interlocutors, who ostensibly thought John trustworthy, might be persuaded that Jesus speaks truthfully. This logic applies more fully as well, as evident among John's disciples who, because of John's testimony, become the first disciples of Jesus (1:35–42). The reason that John has been "sent from God" (1:6) is to provide a trustworthy witness to Jesus' origins (1:15, 29–36; cf. 3:25–30 [31–36?]), ideally making it easier for people to accept the lofty claims that Jesus makes for himself. Thus, John is both a concession, as well as a point from which people may progress to higher truths.

¹⁴⁹ Jesus makes further "unnecessary" statements for the sake of others, particularly the disciples; I will withhold exploring these until investigating Jesus' adaptability with respect to the disciples in later chapters. Cf. Moloney, *John*, 186; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003), 1.657.

¹⁵⁰ *Hom. Jo.* 40.1 (PG 59.230).

Lazarus

A particularly difficult verse for interpreters to untangle is 11:6. Why did Jesus, who could have healed Lazarus from a distance (as in 4:50), not only fail to act from a distance, but even failed to come to the aid of his beloved friend (11:3) while he was still alive? To some, this inactivity suggests that the Johannine Jesus has a heart of stone, and is so removed from the mundane level of human agony as to be unsympathetic to the plight of Lazarus' sisters, much less the man himself.¹⁵¹ Others, who recognize to an extent the aim of Jesus' delay as aiding the disciples' faith, lack in their interpretations a category for this particular (in)action on Jesus' part.¹⁵² That is, even when readers appreciate that Jesus delays for the disciples' sake, they yet fail to describe adequately what Jesus' motivations are.

To understand Jesus' actions as a failure to respond to human suffering is to miss the point that the Evangelist wants to make in this introduction to the Lazarus narrative. Jesus hints at this point in v. 4: "This illness will not lead to death, but is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God might be glorified through it."¹⁵³ When, two days later, he tells the disciples of his wishes to go to Judea (v. 7), they utterly misunderstand his purposes for going there.¹⁵⁴ Even when he speaks more openly about his intentions, to go to "wake" Lazarus (v. 11), the disciples still fail to perceive his point. The punch line of Jesus' tactic comes at last in John 11:15. When he finally hears that Lazarus has died, Jesus says to the disciples: "I rejoice for your sake that I was not there, so that you might believe (ἵνα πιστεύητε)." Why has Jesus allowed Lazarus to die? So that

151 As indicated, for example, by Moloney's comment (*John*, 326): "The strangeness of Jesus' delay in departure (vv. 5–6) is being explained [in v. 15]. The motivation for Jesus' decision to go to Bethany is a response to God's designs, *not to human need*." That Moloney must even make this contrast implies the recognition of a moral dilemma for interpreters. Cf. also Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John* (trans. Kevyn Smith; New York: Crossroad, 1982), 2.324; R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 110–111.

152 Bultmann, *John*, 398–400; Barrett, *St. John*, 325–27; Smith, *John*, 219–20.

153 Chrysostom comments: "[I]f they [i.e., Martha and Mary] had spoken as the centurion did: 'Only say the word, and my servant will be healed,' He would have done this. But since they called Him to them and thought he ought to have come, for this reason He condescended (συγκάτεισιν) to their wishes and came to the place, so as to raise them up from their lowly opinion of Him. Nevertheless, though He condescended (συγκατιῶν) to them, He continued to show that He was able to heal, even when absent, and that is the reason why He delayed" (*Hom. Jo.* 62.3 [PG 59.346]).

154 Though see Barrett, *St. John*, 327–28, who rightly recognizes that going to Judea does involve danger and risk on the part of the disciples.

the disciples' faith might increase, having seen the greatest example of Jesus' authority over life and death prior to the crucifixion.¹⁵⁵ To be sure, modern readers may still find something objectionable about this tactic, but what *cannot* be said about Jesus' behavior is that it overlooks human need.¹⁵⁶ Rather, the Johannine Jesus acts in accordance with what is, in the Gospel, humanity's *greatest* need, namely, to recognize that in Jesus salvation and eternal life have come, and to respond to his coming with faith.

With respect to adaptability, then, what has Jesus done here? First, he has accommodated to the disciples' need for a very concrete sign of Jesus' power and identity. Moreover, he has recognized that a heightening of the sign's impressiveness is required for a fuller appreciation of his power. He has already healed several people, but the disciples remain as blind to the truth as ever. So he will not simply heal Lazarus, but he will raise the now-deceased Lazarus from the dead.¹⁵⁷ Jesus also resorts to frankness of speech (*παρησία*, v. 14), recognizing that his metaphorical language of sleep in v. 12 led not to understanding, but confusion. Finally, Jesus has acted with a singularity of aim required of an adaptable guide: he does all things so that people (especially his disciples) may believe in him as "the resurrection and the life" (v. 24).¹⁵⁸

The Holy Spirit

Like the figure of John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit's role has received considerable attention from interpreters. Yet, like the character of the Johannine Jesus, treatments of the Spirit in the Fourth Gospel lack a considerable amount of coherence.¹⁵⁹ Some of this arises, no doubt, from the wide array of terms and ideas associated with the Spirit in John: the Spirit is the Paraclete (= Comforter? Counselor? Advocate?) (14:16), the Spirit of Truth (v. 17), one who will continue Jesus' teaching (v. 26; 16:13), one who testifies to Jesus (15:26), and one who

155 Bultmann, *John*, 400; Schnackenburg, *St. John*, 2.327.

156 Contra Moloney, *John*, 326.

157 Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John: Based on the Revised Standard Version* (NCB; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1981), 391–92.

158 See Chapter 4 for a discussion on the two paired characters in John 11, Martha and Mary.

159 Bennema (*The Power of Saving Wisdom: An Investigation of Spirit and Wisdom in Relation to the Soteriology of the Fourth Gospel* [WUNT 11 148; Tübingen: Mohr, 2002], 244–48) opts for the notion of "life-giving cognitive agent" as the title that gives coherence to the various aspects of the Spirit in John, but this title seems to create gratuitous complexity to various functions that, as I will argue, can best be characterized under the broad (and simpler) heading of "adaptability."

glorifies Jesus (16:14).¹⁶⁰ Moreover, the Spirit becomes a simulacrum for Jesus after the latter's departure to the Father. In light of these many roles, one may begin to see why a coherent view of the Spirit in John remains wanting.¹⁶¹

Yet adaptability provides a means by which to gather together, to some extent, these various ways of talking about the Παράκλητος. First, the Evangelist frequently notes the Spirit's role as one who continues to teach the disciples (allowing them to continue to progress even while their pedagogue is physically absent). For example, in several instances (2:17, 22; 12:16; 13:7) the disciples witness events in Jesus' life, but fail to apprehend their meaning. But, in all of these instances, the disciples remembered the events after the resurrection (at which point they received the Spirit; 20:22), and reassessed the meaning of these events, recognizing greater truths than they recalled at the time.¹⁶² This illustrates what Jesus himself had told them: "The Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you everything and remind you of everything which I said to you" (14:26). The Paraclete will not only teach, but will enable the disciples to recall things that Jesus has said and done, enabling them to progress with respect to their faith and understanding. Seen in this way, the Paraclete is (like John the Baptist) a fine example of Jesus' pedagogical adaptability.¹⁶³

Moreover, Jesus mentions several times in the farewell discourse (chs. 13–17) that he has "many things" he wishes to teach the disciples, but that "you cannot bear it yet" (16:12). Jesus is accommodating here to the disciples' present ability to understand his words (ability that has progressed somewhat: see 16:4–5,

160 M. Gourgès, for one, attempts to differentiate between the titles "Spirit of Truth" and "Paraclete" as belonging to the various roles of the Holy Spirit in John (Michel Gourgès, "Le paraclet, l'esprit de vérité: Deux désignations, deux fonctions," in *Theology and Christology in the Fourth Gospel: Essays by the Members of the SNTS Johannine Writings Seminar* [eds. G. Van Belle, J.G. van der Watt, and P. Maritz; BETL 184; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005], 83–108.).

161 This is the case even with the title παράκλητος; see George L. Parsenios, *Departure and Consolation: The Johannine Farewell Discourses in Light of Greco-Roman Literature* (NovTSup 117; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 78–79n3. See also *ibid.*, 84 (and *passim*), for a summary of the disunity among scholars regarding the identity and roles of the Spirit in John.

162 Barrett, *St. John*, 168: "During the ministry the disciples, in spite of their call and their belief in Jesus, evoked by his signs (2:11), understood his words little more than his adversaries. It was only his resurrection, and the gift, contingent upon it, of the Paraclete, which called his sayings to mind and enabled them to be understood (14:26; 16:14)."

163 Indeed, even George Johnston (*The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John* [SNTSMS 12; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970], 86) writes: "The spirit of truth, as Paraclete, acts on behalf of Christ and for the advantage of the disciples."

“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going . . .”).¹⁶⁴ Yet the Spirit also works within their capacity to understand more later on, as Jesus says, “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide (ὁδηγήσει) you into all the truth” (v. 12).¹⁶⁵

The Spirit comes also to “abide” (μένειν) with the disciples (14:17). The disciples have no small anxiety about Jesus’ departure (though they do not fully understand it), and Jesus comforts them not only by stressing his return (vv. 18–19), but also by offering the Spirit as a means by which Jesus may be present among his disciples even though he is in the presence of the Father. The Paraclete will be a proxy for Jesus who will be with them forever (v. 16).¹⁶⁶ Moreover, Jesus tells them that, despite the disciples’ sorrow (15:6), it benefits (συμφέρει) them for him to go, because the Paraclete’s presence will be a greater boon to them (v. 7). The Paraclete adapts not only to the disciples’ need for further instruction or for remembering Jesus’ life and teaching; Jesus also sends the Paraclete to accommodate the disciples’ need for their teacher to be near at hand, and for their need to continue hearing commands and comfort from Jesus (15:13–14) even in his absence.

The Evangelist further emphasizes the Spirit’s role as soul-guide by noting that the Paraclete comes not only for the disciples, but also for the world. In addition to teaching the disciples further, the Spirit will also continue Jesus’ work of convicting (ἐλέγχειν) the world (16:8–10). The Spirit will also testify on Jesus’ behalf to the disciples, who will in turn testify to others. This, too, illustrates the aims of the Paraclete’s coming, that he continue challenging and provoking the world so that the world will have to respond.¹⁶⁷ Thus, the Spirit comes not only to speak to the disciples, to continue Jesus’ work as their instructor, but he will continue Jesus’ acts of testimony and judgment, acts that can, ideally, lead people to recognize who Jesus is and to believe in

164 Chrysostom (*Hom. Jo.* 78.2 [PG 59.423]): “‘So that it is not because of My ignorance that I have refrained from saying what I have told you,’ He meant,’ but because of the weakness of My listeners.’”

165 See Bennema, *Power of Saving Wisdom*, 228–34.

166 Chrysostom (*Hom. Jo.* 75.1 [PG 59.403]): “‘And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate.’ Once again the statement is one of humble tenor (Συγκαταβάσεως πάλιν ὁ λόγος). It was probable that, because they did not yet rightly know Him, they would miss that companionship with which they had grown so familiar: His conversation, His presence in the flesh, and would receive no consolation if He were absent. Therefore, what did He say? ‘I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate’; that is, ‘Another like Me.’”

167 Bultmann, *Theology*, 2.88–89. See also Raymond E. Brown, “The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel,” *NTS* 13 (1967): 113–132, esp. 114.

him. Ultimately, the Spirit is “another Paraclete,” in that he adapts to humanity’s need for a Counselor and Advocate in the absence of Jesus, the *original* Paraclete.¹⁶⁸

Looking Ahead

This discussion of the adaptability of the Logos began by looking at Philo’s Logos, and how this figure embodied in several ways the kinds of accommodation as well as the sort of pedagogical techniques found in many authors in Philo’s broader cultural milieu. From there, the focus turned to how the Johannine Word shared with Philo’s Logos a number of traits pertaining to adaptability. In this exploration of the Fourth Gospel in particular, several of Jesus’ actions, even those without a Philonic counterpart, came to look very much like the adaptability found in the literature of this period. Yet cobbling together a coherent image of Jesus as an adaptable guide from several different portions of the Gospel does not yet create a very compelling argument. So, in addition to painting the broad outline of Jesus’ psychagogy in John, a few sections of the Gospel were identified that, when read with the concept of adaptability in mind, stood out as clear instances of pedagogy. Yet as mentioned, the various paired figures of the Gospel offer the best places in which to explore Jesus’ adaptability, to see how the Johannine Jesus appears, in many ways, as “a man of many turns.”¹⁶⁹

168 See also Parnsenios’ fuller treatment of the Paraclete as one who accommodates to Jesus’ absence and provides a token of Jesus’ future presence: Parnsenios, *Departure and Consolation*, 77–109.

169 Homer, *Od.* 1.1.

Adapting to Extremes: Variation and Progression in John 3–4

The glorious fount of Him Who was sitting
at the well as Giver of drink to all,
flows to each according to His will:
different springs according to those who drink.
From the well a single undifferentiated drink
came up each time for those who drank.
The living Fount lets distinct blessings
flow to distinct people.

EPHREM THE SYRIAN, *On Virginity* 23.3¹

Well over a century ago, B.F. Westcott noted the ways in which the portrayals of Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman offered up contrasting images of persons who encountered Jesus, presenting completely opposite images in terms of gender, status, ethnicity, etc. He was not the first to recognize this difference,² and many after him have followed suit, writing extensively on this unique juxtaposition in the Gospels.³ Notably, Alan Culpepper commented on these diverse characters in his *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*:

-
- 1 Cited and translated in Kathleen E. McVey, "St. Ephrem's Understanding of Spiritual Progress: Some Points of Comparison with Origen of Alexandria," *The Harp* 1.2–3 (1988): 120. See also John Chrysostom, *Anom.* 9.13. Similar sentiments appear in *Pesiqta deRab Kahana* 12.24–25, which discusses God's accommodation to the Israelites at Sinai, appearing to each according to what they needed.
 - 2 *The Gospel According to St. John: The Authorized Version* (London: J. Murray, 1882; repr., 1896, 1900, 1908), 67.
 - 3 E.g., Eva Krafft, "Die Personen des Johannesevangeliums," *EvT* 16 (1956): 19; Francis J. Moloney, "From Cana to Cana (John 2:1–4:54) and the Fourth Evangelist's Concept of Correct (and Incorrect) Faith," in *Studia Biblica 1978: II, Papers on the Gospels* (ed. E.A. Livingstone; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980), 185–213; Mary Margaret Pazdan, "Nicodemus and the Samaritan Woman: Contrasting Models of Discipleship," *BTB* 17 (1987): 145–148; Craig L. Blomberg, "The Globalization of Biblical Interpretation: A Test Case—John 3–4," *BBR* 5 (1995): 1–15; Winsome Munro, "The Pharisee and the Samaritan in John: Polar or Parallel?," *CBQ* 57 (1995): 710–728; Margaret M. Beirne, *Women and Men in the Fourth Gospel: a Genuine Discipleship of Equals*

Jesus, the heavenly revealer, is totally incomprehensible to those whose understanding is bound to the earthly. In this respect, Nicodemus is the *paradigm* of the Jews' inability to grasp the meaning of Jesus' metaphorical discourses and symbolic action. The Samaritan woman, an *example* of one who comes step by step to accept Jesus, at first does not understand that Jesus is the bearer and source of 'living water' (4:10–15). (emphasis added)⁴

To many interpreters like Culpepper, Nicodemus and the Samaritan have a representative role, and often they appear to illustrate the wide variety of persons who hear and react to the revelatory claims of the Johannine Jesus. Thus, the focus of studies of these passages has fallen overwhelmingly upon these two fascinating characters.

Reading these passages through the lens of Jesus' adaptable pedagogy, however, puts the emphasis on an important though persistently overlooked element in these two scenes (3:1–21 and 4:1–42): not only do these characters respond to Jesus differently, but *Jesus* also engages with each of them in significantly different ways. Indeed, some fifteen centuries before Westcott, John Chrysostom made this very point, seeing Jesus accommodating his actions to each of these rather dissimilar characters.⁵ That is, Jesus shows himself eminently adaptable with both individuals. The richly contrasted nature of these two figures makes these scenes particularly appropriate for displaying Jesus' adaptable pedagogy.

These two scenes provide ample material for exploring Jesus' adaptability also because they appear as two extended dialogues, providing a glimpse of Jesus' pedagogical method as he attempts to guide both Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, encouraging each to progress according to his/her

(JSNTSup 242; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 67–75; Cornelis Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 147–174.

4 R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 163. For a very different comparison including Nicodemus and the blind man of John 9, see David K. Rensberger, *Johannine Faith and Liberating Community* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988), 37–51.

5 See especially *Hom. Jo.* 32.1 (PG 59.184). See also George L. Parsenios, "The Jesus of History and Divine Adaptability in St. John Chrysostom's Interpretation of John 4," in *Jesus Research: New Methodologies and Perceptions. The Second Princeton-Prague Symposium on Jesus Research* (ed. James Charlesworth and Petr Pokorný; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2014), 863–873. Parsenios focuses his attention primarily on Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman, but does give some attention to the contrast between her and Nicodemus.

ability.⁶ Specifically, the discussion below will make clear that the Johannine Jesus accommodates uniquely and appropriately to each person: in chapter 3, Jesus must lead Nicodemus to recognize his own ignorance of Jesus' origins and teachings before he can begin to hear Jesus' sublime truths. For the Samaritan Woman, Jesus will guide her step by step to a greater awareness of his identity and significance. This chapter will also highlight how Jesus adapts over time to both characters, as they each make progress or fail to do so. Yet these diverging approaches have a common aim: Jesus accommodates to each individual's need and takes the necessary steps to enable each person to move forward in faith and understanding—though what each character does in response to that progression is a complex concern. In other words, these two scenes together demonstrate, in Ephrem's words about Jesus, that “different springs according to those who drink. From the well a single undifferentiated drink came up each time for those who drank. The living Fount lets distinct blessings flow to distinct people.”⁷ In the exegesis below, then, I will at times focus on the dialogue partners, but only insofar as they cast light onto Jesus' pedagogical work, to shed more light on *how* Jesus accommodates to them and *why*.⁸

Characters in Contrast

To better appreciate why Jesus engages each of these characters uniquely, it will help first to explore how exactly the two characters differ from one another.⁹ The two figures appear as the outer panels of a triptych stretching

6 For this reason, Winsome Munro (“The Pharisee and the Samaritan”) is probably right to utilize the term “parallel” rather than “contrast” in discussing these two characters. Even so, I will not be dogmatic about this distinction, since the contrast between the two *characters* makes their appearing in parallel *scenes* that much more remarkable. Moreover, Zumstein notes that both scenes deal with revelation and christology in very similar ways; Jean Zumstein, *L'évangile selon Saint Jean (1–12)* (CNT IVa; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2014), 142.

7 Translated in McVey, “St. Ephrem's Understanding,” 120.

8 Davies indicates the necessity of attending to the main character rather than focusing unwaveringly on minor ones: “Although the narrative is not focused through any of the characters, it is focused *on* Jesus” (Margaret Davies, *Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel* [JSNTSup 69; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992], 39).

9 Questions concerning these two characters abound beyond the literary-driven exploration I am doing here. For issues regarding Nicodemus' historical identity, see Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist, 1979), 72; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 136–137; Jouette M. Bassler, “Mixed Signals: Nicodemus in the Fourth Gospel,” *JBL* 108 (1989): 635–646; Richard Bauckham, “Nicodemus and the Gurion Family,” *JTS* 47 (1996):

from 3:1–4:42 (with John the Baptist in the center, 3:22–36).¹⁰ This literary arrangement, focusing on three different individuals and their reception of Jesus, focuses primarily on John the Baptist as the one who truly “gets” Jesus, and accurately perceives his identity. The outer panels of Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, however, show two characters struggling to grasp who Jesus is and what he offers.

Yet, as already mentioned, the pair struggles in contrasting ways in part because of their stark differences. The Evangelist makes several of these differences clear, the first of which has to do with gender and naming. The figure in John 3 is a named male (“There was a person [ἄνθρωπος] . . . Nicodemus was his

1–37; Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 148–149. On the question of whether Nicodemus represents some historical group vis-à-vis the Johannine community, see Marinus de Jonge, “Nicodemus and Jesus: Some Observations on Misunderstanding and Understanding in the Fourth Gospel,” in *Jesus, Stranger from Heaven and Son of God: Jesus Christ and the Christians in Johannine Perspective* (ed. John E. Steely; trans. John E. Steely; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977), 29–47; J. Louis Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (3rd ed.; NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 88–89. Cf. also Raymond F. Collins, “From John to the Beloved Disciple: An Essay on Johannine Characters,” in *Gospel Interpretation: Narrative Critical and Social-Scientific Approaches* (ed. J.D. Kingsbury; Harrisburg, Penn.: Trinity Press International, 1997), 36.

On the Samaritan woman, there has been an exponential growth of scholarly works on this passage, fueled by the growth of feminist interpretations. Examples include Stephen D. Moore, “Are There Impurities in the Living Water That the Johannine Jesus Dispenses? Deconstruction, Feminism, and the Samaritan Woman,” *BibInt* 1 (1993): 207–227; Danna Nolan Fewell and Gary A. Phillips, “Drawn to Excess, or Reading Beyond Betrothal,” *Semeia* 77 (1997): 23–58; Jean K. Kim, “A Korean Feminist Reading of John 4:1–42,” *Semeia*, 78 (1997): 109–119; Conway, *Men and Women*; Beirne, *Women and Men*; Jane S. Webster, “Transcending Alterity: Strange Woman to Samaritan Woman,” in *A Feminist Companion to John, Vol. 1* (eds. Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff; FCNT 4; London: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 126–142. Beyond such recent works, however, J.N. Day has compiled an impressive amount of interpretive positions throughout the history of reception in her work *The Woman at the Well: Interpretation of John 4:1–42 in Retrospect and Prospect* (BibInterp 61; Leiden: Brill, 2002). The passage as a whole, however, presents more issues than space allows me to address. Excellent and thorough discussions of this passage and its difficulties exist, though, such as Brown, *John*, 169–185; Teresa Okure, *The Johannine Approach to Mission: A Contextual Study of John 4:1–42* (WUNT 31; Tübingen: Mohr, 1988); Moloney, *John*, 113–150; Fewell and Phillips, “Drawn to Excess.”

10 Moloney, “From Cana to Cana”; Pazdan, “Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman,” 145. Pazdan sees the triptych extending further in either direction, though, and that in 3–4 there is more properly a diptych.

name,” v. 1), while the other is an anonymous woman (γυνή; 4:7).¹¹ In the world of the Fourth Gospel, this difference in gender would have suggested something already about the kinds of influence and privileges of each character.¹² Implicitly, too, since the woman lacks a name, there is a degree to which the Evangelist characterizes her as a “nobody.”

Yet Nicodemus’ introduction does not immediately imply benefit and honor: by referring to him as ἄνθρωπος, the Evangelist evokes the untrustworthy people described in the verses immediately before (2:23–25), especially vv. 24–25: “Many believed in his name, having seen the signs he performed. But Jesus, for his part, did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all things . . . , for he knew what was in humanity (ἐν τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ).”¹³ That Nicodemus next appears with the title of ἄνθρωπος suggests that, while he may have some privilege and even influence, the Evangelist has cast some doubt on his character from the outset, something not present in the introduction of the woman.

The differences between the two characters heighten even further when the Evangelist adds two parallel prepositional phrases to the characters:

Ἦν δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων (3:1a)
 ἔρχεται γυνή ἐκ τῆς Σαμαρείας (4:7a)

This ἐκ in the Fourth Gospel holds much more significance, as Leander Keck has argued, than simply indicating the class among whom these characters number.¹⁴ Already in 1:12–13, the Evangelist has signaled the importance of being born ἐκ θεοῦ, as opposed to being born “*of* blood or *of* the will of the

11 While this particular term for the character might, in some circumstances, be used only as an initial indicator of one character’s gender, the frequency with which this particular term (rather than a personal pronoun) appears in the dialogue—some thirteen times—highlights the centrality of her gender in the Evangelist’s characterization. Furthermore, when the disciples enter the scene, they are shocked not that Jesus is speaking with a Samaritan, but a woman (4:27).

12 See, e.g., Maud W. Gleason, “Elite Male Identity in the Roman Empire,” in *Life, Death, and Entertainment in the Roman Empire* (eds. David Stone Potter and D.J. Mattingly; Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 67–84.

13 Hartwig Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium* (HNT 6; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 183.

14 Leander E. Keck, “Derivation as Destiny: ‘Of-ness’ in Johannine Christology, Anthropology, and Soteriology,” in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith* (eds. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 274–88. Keck (274) strongly opposes Trumbower’s reading of John’s anthropology as being of fixed origins (Jeffrey A. Trumbower, *Born from Above: The Anthropology of the Gospel of John* [HUT 29; Tübingen: Mohr, 1992]). Here I follow Keck, who rightly notes that the cosmic and

flesh or *of* the will of a man.” While this verse alone does not import weighty significance to the use of ἐκ in 3:1 and 4:7, the dialogue with Nicodemus will make clear that where one is “from” (ἐκ; 3:5, 6, 8; cf. 3:1) matters a great deal in the Evangelist’s view. For Nicodemus in particular, the Evangelist ties Nicodemus’ “of-ness” to the Pharisees—hardly the exemplars of authentic faith in the Gospel—and this signals a potential problem for Nicodemus’ ability to receive Jesus.¹⁵ Yet beyond this higher level of significance for the phrase ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων, it also reveals pertinent information at the level of “plain meaning”, revealing that Nicodemus possesses some measure of learning and authority. His privilege and influence the Evangelist further elevates by noting that he was a “ruler of the Jews.” He represents, in many ways, the upper end of the scale of Jewish society, possessing not only influence, but also education, prestige, and religious dignity.¹⁶

The Evangelist portrays the woman’s “of-ness” quite on the opposite end of the spectrum: she is a Samaritan. She comes, in the mind of first-century Jews, from one of the most reviled peoples of the earth.¹⁷ Religiously deviant from the Jewish perspective, a Samaritan *woman* would be understood as doubly deprived of any dignity, religious or otherwise. And though the text says nothing explicit to this extent, in all probability the woman had little influence or education.¹⁸ The effect of this information in parallel to the Jewish leader would, initially at least, drive down the audience’s estimation of the woman.

anthropological dualism in John remains far more porous than Trumbower’s reading suggests, especially in view of 1:12–13.

- 15 Beutler suggests, however, that in the context of the Gospel Nicodemus shows great courage, despite the resistance on the part of the rest of the Sanhedrin; thus, Beutler underplays the “of-ness” of Nicodemus as a Pharisee; Johannes Beutler, *Das Johannesevangelium: Kommentar* (Freiburg: Herder, 2013), 135–36.
- 16 As Krafft (“Presonen,” 20) notes, the particular pains that the Evangelist takes to portray Nicodemus convey the sense that Nicodemus is not just any leading Jewish man, but a particularly powerful and influential one.
- 17 For a discussion of the most extensive portrayal of the Samaritans, that of Josephus, see Ingrid Hjelm, “The Samaritans in Josephus’ Jewish ‘History,’” in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress of the Société d’Études Samaritaines* (Paris: Geuthner, 2005), 27–39; Reinhard Pummer, *The Samaritans in Flavius Josephus* (TSAJ 129; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).
- 18 So Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 161–162. This initial understanding of the woman as a “nobody,” as quintessentially other, should not be forgotten even if she shows herself to be a remarkable character, as she in fact does.

The point made by the contrast of these two figures is this: Nicodemus is a “somebody,” while this woman is, it seems, a “nobody.”¹⁹

Just as important as the respective status of the characters, however, is the time in which the dialogue occurs: whereas Nicodemus comes to Jesus at night (3:2a), the woman happens upon Jesus in midday (4:6).²⁰ In a Gospel filled with several references to the conflict between light and darkness, such details cannot be overlooked.²¹ While Nicodemus does possess power and privilege, his dialogue with Jesus *at night* has suggested to many that he speaks from an epistemology of ignorance.²² Conversely, it has been suggested that the woman’s conversation with Jesus, taking place as it does at the “sixth hour”—probably noon—illustrates the enlightenment with which she engages Jesus.²³ To be sure, one can make too much of such subtle details, but at the very least it adds yet another layer of differentiation between the Pharisee and the Samaritan.

More differences appear between the two: Nicodemus seeks out Jesus in Jerusalem, the heart of Jewish life, but the woman happens upon Jesus outside of a city in Samaria. Nicodemus presumes to speak first on his meeting with Jesus; the woman only speaks when Jesus asks her a question. Nicodemus presumes to know something about Jesus’ authority and identity (3:2), whereas his counterpart recognizes only that he is a Jew (4:9). Many of these features of the pair come from direct characterization. Below, however, I will draw out more of the indirectly illustrated aspects of these characters. While traits like these characterize the two figures individually, the contrast between them lends further nuance to their respective identities.

The comparison of these two characters also reveals something important about the Johannine Jesus. He, like Dio Chrysostom’s version of Odysseus, speaks persuasively “before king or commoner, freeman or slave, no matter whether he was himself regarded as being a king or, alternatively, unknown and poor, and did likewise when addressing either a man, a woman, or a maiden.”²⁴ The Johannine Jesus confines himself not to an audience of the “great,” but

19 Culpepper (*Anatomy*, 136) describes the contrast thus: “In sharp juxtaposition, the next character to engage Jesus in dialogue lacks all of Nicodemus’ advantages. He is a male teacher of Israel; she is a woman of Samaria. He has a noble heritage; she has a shameful past. He has seen signs and knows Jesus is ‘from God’; she meets Jesus as a complete stranger.”

20 Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 245–46.

21 Cf. 1:4–9; 3:19–21; 8:12; 9:4–5; 11:9–10; 12:35–36, 46.

22 Wayne A. Meeks, “The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism,” *JBL* 91 (1972): 54.

23 Susan Hylen, *Imperfect Believers: Ambiguous Characters in the Gospel of John* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 43.

24 Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 71.3 (Crosby, LCL).

has in mind the benefit of all, and so aims to guide all who will receive him (cf. 1:10–13), whether a learned male from the heart of Jewish society at night, or a lonely woman outside a city in Samaria at noon. Having so contrasted the Samaritan woman and Nicodemus, then, I will now attend to how Jesus engages each of them, accommodating and adapting to them individually, in order to guide both to the singular goal of life and faith.

Assertion and Invitation: The Opening Exchanges

Since my focus is on how Jesus interacts with both characters uniquely, rather than dealing with each scene separately I will analyze the two scenes in parallel fashion, noting both marked similarities and key differences. Not only will this highlight the variations of Jesus' actions, but it will also illustrate how those actions are appropriate for each setting and interlocutor. It will also allow for a fuller appreciation of the ways in which Jesus works to lead such contrasted characters to the same end.²⁵ I will begin by exploring how the two dialogues begin, as the beginning of each scene indicates how Jesus will begin his pedagogy. With Nicodemus, he must begin by undermining the man's confidence in his own perception, while with the woman Jesus must invite her, slowly and cautiously, to begin to see that he is more than meets the eye.

"We Know that You Are a Teacher . . ." (3:7–3)

The Evangelist sets the scene in 3:1–2a, giving his audience just enough information to have reservations about the quality of Nicodemus' character. From his introduction and his coming to Jesus by night, readers may understand Nicodemus to be learned and even influential, as well as willing to dialogue with Jesus, but nevertheless one who comes ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων and is somehow connected to the untrustworthy folk of 2:23–25. That is, in the Gospel's dualism Nicodemus seems to approach Jesus "from below," and likely unaware of his own sorry state.²⁶

²⁵ Whether he accomplishes this aim is however debatable, as I will discuss shortly.

²⁶ As Culpepper notes, Nicodemus is the first character presented neither as fully positive or negative; R. Alan Culpepper, "Nicodemus: The Travail of New Birth," in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Literary Approaches to Sixty-Seven Figures in John* (ed. by. Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann; WUNT 314; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 255.

Indeed, in his opening words to Jesus, Nicodemus sounds like a man full of confidence, who presumes to understand Jesus: “Rabbi, we know (οἶδαμεν)²⁷ that you have come from God as a teacher (διδάσκαλος), for no one is able (οὐδεὶς..δύναται) to do these signs (σημεῖα) which you have done unless (ἐάν μὴ) God is with him” (3:2b).²⁸ Nicodemus’ beliefs about Jesus’ identity expressed here summarize the faith of those who, like Nicodemus, have seen the signs and believed (“we know”; cf. 2:23).²⁹ To such as these, Jesus is a teacher under God’s commission and with divine power, not an inaccurate perception of Jesus’ identity and mission.³⁰ Such a statement suggests that Nicodemus engages Jesus as an equal, if not as one slightly more honored than Nicodemus himself. Yet why, exactly, Nicodemus chooses to say *this* to Jesus to begin the conversation remains obscure apart from giving attention to Jesus’ response.³¹

This “response,” however, appears at first to have nothing to do with what Nicodemus has just said: “Truly, I tell you, unless (ἐάν μὴ) a person is born ἄνωθεν,³² a person cannot see (οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν) the kingdom of God” (3:3).³³

27 Many (e.g., Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 185) suggest the “we” indicates the larger conversation of the world behind the text between Christians and Jews regarding Jesus, but it does not seem that endorsement or rejection of this conceptualization is required by the attention to Nicodemus’s characterization here.

28 All of the words in parenthesis will carry importance in the ensuing dialogue.

29 Meeks, “Man from Heaven,” 54–55.

30 As Bultmann (*The Gospel of John: a Commentary* [trans. G.R. Beasley-Murray, R.W.N. Hoare, and J.K. Riches; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971], 133) writes: “Jesus’ miracles have, it is true, made an impression of him also, but this does not mean that they have moved him to ‘faith’; they have drawn his attention to Jesus and set him asking questions.” In other words, as I noted in the previous chapter, the signs are not sufficient for faith, but they do have the capacity to draw people to belief in Jesus. Cf. also Zumstein, *Jean* (1–12), 114.

31 Beutler (*Johannesevangelium*, 136), sees here an anticipated question left unstated, but nevertheless answered by Jesus. This seems to ignore the great contrast between Nicodemus’ confident assertion “we know” and where the conversation ultimately leads (“You are a teacher of Israel, and you do not understand these things?”, v. 11).

32 At this point in the narrative, I prefer to leave the preposition untranslated, as this is the only possible way of maintaining the ambiguity of “above” or “anew” in Jesus’ statement, which in turn makes Nicodemus’ misunderstanding somewhat less surprising.

33 Contrary to the claims of Bultmann and Schnackenburg, Nicodemus is not implicitly asking a question about salvation; Bultmann, *John*, 134–135; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John* (trans. Kevyn Smith; 3 vols.; New York: Crossroad, 1982), 1.366. Instead, see Conway (*Men and Women*, 95): “To turn this statement [v. 2] into a question smoothes away the disjunction between his words and Jesus’ response. Moreover,

This is often seen as a key bit of evidence in readings that highlight Jesus' elusiveness. Culpepper and Stibbe, to offer just two notable examples, both see Jesus as elusive and aloof without any pedagogical rationale.³⁴ Jesus' mysteriousness arises, in their view, from his heavenly origin, making him alien and inscrutable to the human realm. When Jesus, then, essentially ignores Nicodemus' statement, he only highlights the fact of their sharply different origins. Their observations on Jesus' strangeness in this passage are apposite, but nevertheless incomplete, since the Johannine Jesus does not obscure things simply because of his foreignness to the world below. Close attention to the dialogue reveals Jesus' attempts to guide the man, and in this Jesus will appear elusive, yet even this fits into his psychagogic aims. In v. 3, Jesus, while appearing to disregard Nicodemus' comments, in fact takes up key words from his interlocutor's statement (δύναται. . . ἐὰν μὴ) and in so doing frames the issues he aims to address. Jesus has raised the issue of having one's perception reformed by birth ἄνωθεν by the use of ἰδεῖν.³⁵ The presence of this term, loaded as it is with connotations of perception and understanding in John, signals that Jesus may have more than mere sight in mind.³⁶

With Jesus' response directing the reader to issues of perception and understanding, Nicodemus' statement takes on a new light. In 3:2b, he offers what amounts to his perception of Jesus' identity and origins. He makes a confident assertion ("we know," οἶδαμεν) of what he understands of Jesus' identity and source of power. Moreover, his "knowledge" of Jesus arises not from Jesus'

it destroys the narrative progression of Nicodemus' own comments, from confident statement to confused questions. Recognizing the tension between Nicodemus' opening proposition and the rest of the conversation is critical for interpreting the nature of his relationship with Jesus."

34 Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 110–112; Mark W.G. Stibbe *John's Gospel* (NTR; London: Routledge, 1994), 55.

35 D.M. Smith (*John* [ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1999], 94) accurately summarizes the point: "After Nicodemus' respectful approach, Jesus' response (v. 3) seems abrupt, if not rude. That response nevertheless affords a crucial insight into what is going on: Nicodemus and Jesus cannot converse meaningfully because Nicodemus has not yet been born from above (cf. 1:13; also 1 Pet 1:3), as Jesus is from above (v. 13)."

36 Throughout the Gospel, verbs such as γινώσκω, οἶδα, ὁράω, βλέπω, and other verbs of perception all intersect in various ways. These words also tend, in different contexts, to refer to different levels of perception. For more on this terminology and its relation to faith in John, see Craig R. Koester, "Hearing, Seeing, and Believing in the Gospel of John," *Bib* 70 (1989): 327–348; Karl Olav Sandnes, "Whence and Whither: A Narrative Perspective on the Birth anōthen (John 3,3–8)," *Bib* 86 (2005): 153–173. In 3:3, moreover, the object of sight, ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ, serves as a synonym for salvation and eternal life. So, to "see" the kingdom would be to experience it by a radical reorientation, i.e., birth ἄνωθεν.

teaching, nor from his having heard the testimony of John, nor that of scripture (5:33–35, 39), but *from the signs*. The signs, to be sure, have a relationship to faith that remains complex throughout the entirety of the Gospel. They can provide a starting point for knowledge, but only when one sees the heavenly truth within the earthly sign.³⁷ Nicodemus' statement of knowledge, however, comes only from a perception of the signs that originates "from below."³⁸ Moreover, Nicodemus boldly (or audaciously) begins this conversation as if he already possessed insight regarding Jesus.³⁹ The Evangelist has, in effect, utilized his characterization of Nicodemus in 3:1–2a to suggest that he possesses privilege and authority among the Jewish people, and comes to Jesus at night. It should not surprise the reader, then, if Nicodemus assumes an air of confidence, without recognizing his inadequate understanding.⁴⁰

Jesus' response aims at disarming Nicodemus' supposed knowledge, and to challenge the assumption that Jesus and Nicodemus stand on equal ground.⁴¹ The problem has not to do with the *content* of that knowledge—as noted above, it would simply sound incomplete to the Evangelist—but with the *perspective* on reality.⁴² John Chrysostom saw this, too: Jesus, rather than pointing out the incompleteness of Nicodemus' claim, instead points his vision upward

37 See George L. Parsenios, *Rhetoric and Drama in the Johannine Lawsuit Motif* (WUNT 258; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 127–128. He writes, "[I]f the signs are evidence, they are evidence of a certain kind. They are evidence in a world where the bases of our knowledge have been problematized, where signs and witnesses are useful and excellent, but what really matters is seeing the invisible reality within the visible Jesus To call the signs evidence, therefore, is not in any way to suggest that this makes the question of faith easy or obvious. The signs are revealed as evidence in a situation in which every moment of revelation is equally a moment of concealment."

38 J.H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John* (ed. Alan Hugh McNeile; 2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1928), 1.101.

39 So C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 171; de Jonge, "Nicodemus and Jesus," 41; Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (SP 4; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 91; Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John* (BNTC 4; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005), 149; Zumstein, *Jean* (1–12), 114.

40 As Thyen notes (*Johannesevangelium*, 188), while Nicodemus asks a christological question, Jesus responds by focusing on soteriology and epistemology, in order that his interlocutor may, after being born "from above," be in a position to understand things christological.

41 Peter Cotterell, "The Nicodemus Conversation: A Fresh Appraisal," *ExpTim* 96 (1985): 240.

42 Conway (*Men and Women*, 95–96): "In this way, Nicodemus' religious expertise, his ability to discern the presence of God, is subtly called into question." See also Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (AB 29–29A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 1.138.

through the use of the metaphor of birth ἀνωθεν.⁴³ The Johannine Jesus, then, takes up the pedagogical maneuver most aptly suited for one who *thinks* he possesses knowledge: the elenchus (ἐλεγχος).⁴⁴ While what takes place here does not possess the sophistication of the Socratic elenchus, the forms are surprisingly similar on a basic level. To begin, Jesus himself will (later in this dialogue) refer to his work as ἐλεγχος (3:20), and the idea throughout the Gospel has legal connotations, as Parsenius has persuasively argued.⁴⁵ Jesus will also be cross-examined later on in John 8. In Plato's works, too, the word has a legal connotation, that of being cross-examined, yet there too it also has a strong psychagogic element, as in the *Euthyphro*.⁴⁶ In his "cross-examining," one consistent aim of Socrates is to drive his self-assured interlocutors to a sense that in truth they know nothing, otherwise referred to as ἀπορία, i.e., an inability to proceed. A prime example of Socratic ἀπορία and ἐλεγχος comes from the *Meno*:

Socrates, I used to be told, before I began to meet you, that yours was just a case of being in doubt yourself and making others doubt also, and so now I find you are merely bewitching me with your spells and incantations, which have reduced me to utter perplexity (ὥστε μεστὸν ἀπορίας γεγονέναι) For in truth I feel my soul and my tongue quite benumbed, and I am at a loss what answer to give you. And yet on countless occasions I have made abundant speeches on virtue to various people—and very good speeches they were, so I thought—but now I cannot say one word as to what it is.⁴⁷

Like the method of Socrates, the pedagogy of the Johannine Jesus aims at exposing the false knowledge of Nicodemus in order to guide him to higher

43 John Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 24.2 (PG 59.146). See also J.G. Van der Watt, "Knowledge of Earthly Things? The Use of ἐπίγειος in John 3:12," *Neot* 43 (2009): 300–302.

44 The most famous user of this tool was, of course, Socrates. As with Philo in the previous chapter, however, I do not suggest that the Evangelist *knew* about Socrates, much less read any of the dialogues; only that Plato and John seem to take up similar ideas. For an extensive discussion of the elenchus in Socrates, see the collection of essays Gary Alan Scott, ed., *Does Socrates Have a Method?: Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and Beyond* (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), especially François Renaud, "Humbling as Upbringing: The Ethical Dimension of the Elenchus in the *Lysis*," 183–198.

45 Parsenius, *Rhetoric and Drama*, 59.

46 Cf. Hayden W. Ausland, "Forensic Characteristics of Socratic Argumentation" in *Does Socrates Have a Method? Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and Beyond*, esp. 59–60.

47 *Meno*, 79e–80b (Lamb, LCL).

truth. Like the Socratic dialogue, however, this path toward truth may have to pass through ἀπορία, an inability to move forward in one's current path.⁴⁸ At the beginning, Nicodemus had much to say, but he will be reduced to bewilderment (see vv. 9–10).

The statement in v. 3 already begins to upend Nicodemus' claim to knowledge: "Unless a person is born ἄνωθεν, a person cannot see the kingdom of God." Already recognized by Nicodemus as a teacher with divine approval, Jesus can make this solemn statement to disrupt his conversation partner's sense of control and confidence. In particular, Jesus takes up the famous double-entendre of ἄνωθεν.⁴⁹ Anyone unfamiliar with Johannine cosmology might reasonably share Nicodemus' confusion.⁵⁰ Why does Jesus not make his point more clearly, utilizing a less ambiguous adverb? Chrysostom considers this kind of ambiguity a common technique for an adaptable guide:

Now, it was for this reason that Christ often spoke obscurely, because He wished to make His hearers more inclined to ask questions and to cause them to be more attentive. What has been said with its meaning obvious often escapes the listener, but what has been said obscurely makes him more curious and eager.⁵¹

And this is the case here: Jesus does not explain his statement about this birth, and his lack of clarity leads to a question from his dialogue partner, and may perhaps even lead Nicodemus to a moment of recognition that he does not, in fact, understand who Jesus is or what he is about.

48 For more on some suggestive parallels between Socrates and John's Jesus, see Paul D. Duke, *Irony in the Fourth Gospel* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), 9–11. To be sure, Socrates and the Johannine Jesus are up to very different things, even as both make use tools like the *aporia*. That is, while Socrates typically aims at getting people to recognize their own ignorance, the Johannine Jesus offers revelation and salvation on the other side of the aporetic moment.

49 One could reasonably read this double entendre as an attempt to victimize Nicodemus for the reader's benefit. Such a reading, however, fails to appreciate the pedagogical aims of the Jesus character in the Gospel, who has come "not to condemn the world, but to save it" (3:16), including Nicodemus.

50 As Parsenios notes, Jesus' aphoristic statements throughout this dialogue underscore dramatically the difference between the two kinds of people: those of flesh and those of Spirit; George L. Parsenios, "A Sententious Silence: First Thoughts on the Fourth Gospel and the *Ardens Style*," in *Portraits of Jesus: Studies in Christology* (ed. Susan E. Myers; WUNT II 321; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 13–26.

51 *Hom. Jo.* 24.2 (PG 59.146). For a more recent expression of this same idea, see Beirne, *Women and Men*, 75–76.

“Woman, Give Me a Drink” (4:4–9)

Before exploring the dialogue with Nicodemus further, I now turn to the opening exchange between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Here the Evangelist presents a different situation and interaction altogether. The discussion begins not with the assertion of knowledge, but with a rather subtle invitation from Jesus to the woman. This invitation will, in due course, change the woman’s life.⁵² But first, several boundaries must be overcome, not least of all the distinction between Jew and Samaritan.

The scene begins with Jesus leaving Judea for Galilee (4:3), and *en route* he comes to Samaria,⁵³ to Sychar near the well Jacob gave his son (τοῦ χωρίου ὃ ἔδωκεν Ἰακώβ [τῷ] Ἰωσήφ τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ; 4:4–5). Such a description is not incidental to the dialogue. The particular verb here, δίδωμι, will play an important role throughout this dialogue, recalling both the Father’s giving of the Son (3:16–18) and that the Father has given all things into the Son’s hands (vv. 34–35). Moreover, the concepts of “giving” and “father(s),” introduced in 4:4–5, provide the framework for the following dialogue: In the first half (4:7–15), the dialogue between Jesus and the woman will focus on the question, “Who truly *gives* the living water (i.e., eternal life)?”. In the second half (vv. 16–28), the characters’ attention turns to the question, “Which *father(s)* should one obey?”

The following two verses introduce the dialogue proper: Jesus, having walked from Judea, now becomes tired and sits beside the well, “and it was about the sixth hour” (v. 6). As many have noted, the setting at the well recalls betrothal/hospitality scenes from the Old Testament.⁵⁴ When the woman arrives to draw

52 Attridge puts it well: “The character of this Woman, like that of other women prominent in the Gospel, thus offers a model of transformative encounter with Jesus.” Harold W. Attridge, “The Samaritan Woman: A Woman Transformed,” in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Literary Approaches to Sixty-Seven Figures in John* (ed. by Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann; WUNT 314; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 268.

53 While scholars are nearly divided on whether or not the ἔδει refers to geographic or divine necessity, it may be that such a dichotomy is unnecessary. On the one hand, Josephus (*Life* 269) notes the economy of passing through Samaria while travelling between Judea and Galilee. Yet John’s Jesus is nothing if not in control of everything he does, and divine activity pervades the Gospel so that even this economical route might have been chosen precisely so that, eventually, the Samaritan people might come to believe in Jesus (4:42).

54 Many scholars accept this view, based upon the foundational work of Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 52–60. This motif cannot be ignored for an in-depth interpretation of this passage, but for my purposes the betrothal type-scene must be relegated to the background. For a slightly different position regarding the genre of this scene, see Andrew E. Arterbury, “Breaking the Betrothal Bonds: Hospitality

water for herself, Jesus makes an apparently simple, mundane request: *ὅς μοι πείν* (v. 7b). Quite different from Nicodemus' opening line, claiming as it did knowledge of Jesus' divine commission, the initiation of this interaction comes from Jesus, and seems devoid of any theological significance.⁵⁵

After an aside from the narrator that the disciples had left Jesus alone—underscoring the one-on-one nature of the ensuing discussion (v. 8)—the woman responds somewhat skeptically:

πὼς σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὢν παρ' ἐμοῦ πείν αἰτεῖς γυναικὸς Σαμαρίτιδος οὔσης; οὐ γὰρ συγχρῶνται Ἰουδαῖοι Σαμαρίταις. (v. 9)

The woman responds from surprise that Jesus would knowingly overlook Jewish ethnic boundaries.⁵⁶ Her response also indicates a degree of perceptiveness on her part, insofar as she recognizes the oddity of the request from a Jewish man to a Samaritan, and a woman at that.⁵⁷ Yet as the Evangelist will

in John 4," *CBQ* 72 (2010): 63–83. Arterbury proposes that the type-scene recalled in John 4 is not the betrothal scene, but the hospitality scene, and he makes his argument based not only on OT narratives (e.g., Gen. 24, 29; Ex. 2:15–21), but also on Greek literature such as the *Odyssey*. Essentially, he claims, even the OT well narratives that Alter considers betrothal scenes are really about hospitality, within which (in the ancient Mediterranean world) betrothal could *sometimes*, but not always, take place. In this way, then, the exchange in John 4 trades on larger notions of hospitality and welcoming the stranger, which (if his argument is accepted) corresponds nicely with the Johannine emphasis on receiving Jesus (1:10–13).

55 Zumstein, *Jean* (1–12), 147. Thyen (*Johannesevangelium*, 246), notes that this initiative, in marked contrast to the Synoptic debate scenes in which Jesus is on the defensive, becomes rather typical of Johannine dialogue.

56 How the woman knows Jesus to be a Jew remains unexplained, a piece of information deemed inconsequential to the Evangelist (Bultmann, *John*, 178).

57 Having already situated the dialogue as building upon the betrothal type-scene, it comes as no surprise that gender dynamics are at play in the interaction of the two characters. Nevertheless, some interpreters have seen several sexual innuendos and double entendres in the dialogue; notably, Calum M. Carmichael, "Marriage and the Samaritan Woman," *NTS* 26 (1980): 332–346; Lyle M. Eslinger, "The Wooing of the Woman at the Well: Jesus, the Reader and Reader-Response Criticism," in *The Gospel of John as Literature: An Anthology of Twentieth Century Perspectives* (ed. Mark W.G. Stibbe; *NTTS* 17; Leiden: Brill, 1993), 165–182; Webster, "Transcending Alterity"; Adeline Fehribach, *The Women in the Life of the Bridegroom: A Feminist Historical-Literary Analysis of the Female Characters in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 54–55. Since the passage builds upon the betrothal type-scene and the appearance of the well terminology in LXX Prov. 5:15–18; 23:27; Song 4:12 (πηγὴ, φρέαρ), such a conjecture is not

make plain, Jesus has not made his request because he is in need of anything.⁵⁸ The woman needs something *from him*, the gift of living water (v. 10), but in order for her to be receptive to this, he must first disrupt her preconceived notions of ethnic boundaries. At the level of appearance, the scene seems rather normal and the request—under other circumstances—rather reasonable. Yet that Jesus, a Jewish man, has *knowingly* asked a Samaritan woman for a drink (cf. 2:24–25), suggests that he aims at more than recovering from his journey. Indeed, he is inviting her to make a journey of her own.

Based only on how the two dialogues have begun, Jesus appears to take two very different approaches with the contrasted duo. With Nicodemus, Jesus challenges his confident assertions and demands a change of perception. With the woman, Jesus uses a lighter touch: still challenging her perceptions, he does so through invitation, and invites her to see him as more than a mere Jew. Yet in both Jesus has a single aim: to reorient the sight of his interlocutors, so that they perceive in him more than what they see. He points them beyond their earthbound perceptions, and will continue to do so throughout.

Misunderstanding as a Doorway: Obscure Symbols

The commonalities do not end with this single aim of perceptive transformation, however. One of the things that unite these dialogues is how the Johannine Jesus makes use of misunderstanding to guide. Indeed, as each conversation unfolds, Jesus will say things that more directly challenge the capacities of the Pharisee and the Samaritan to understand him. What Jesus aims to do for each,

entirely out of order. All the same, the presence of sexual undertones in the exchange clashes with the style of the Evangelist throughout the remainder of the Gospel. Sexual connotations do not, moreover, exhaust well and water language in LXX (see, e.g., Jer. 2:13, which contains the phrase *πηγὴν ὕδατος ζῶης*; see also Zech. 14:8), and these other connotations are *at least* as possible as the sexual. Thus, unless other significant instances of such double entendres with sexual undertones can be demonstrated throughout the Gospel, a hypothesis of sexual innuendo in John 4 remains unconvincing. Nevertheless, Eslinger (“Wooing,” 180) does note Jesus’ attempts to raise the woman from “carnal” to sublime things, so even while the discussion about the sexual undertones of the passage may be debated, the idea that Jesus guides the woman to higher truth remains a viable hermeneutical aid for exegesis of the dialogue.

58 Many, however, that the Evangelist includes this detail about Jesus’ thirst and fatigue in order to underscore Jesus’ real (as opposed to apparent) humanity. While this may be the case, it more directly serves the Evangelist’s aims of setting up the ensuing conversation between Jesus and the woman over the issue of “water.”

though, differs significantly, as he will use the woman's misunderstanding as an opportunity to explain further, while he will employ Nicodemus' incomprehension as a means to bring Nicodemus to ἀπορία.

The Problem of Perspective (3:4–8)

Nicodemus' responds to Jesus' statement about birth ἄνωθεν (v. 3) with some puzzlement, and his response offers further insight into his character, as well as the problem that Jesus aims to remedy:

Πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος γεννηθῆναι γέρων ὢν; μὴ δύναται εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ δευτέρον εἰσελθεῖν καὶ γεννηθῆναι; (v. 4)

First, Nicodemus highlights the double meaning of ἄνωθεν, choosing to interpret it as “again” rather than “above.” He, like Jesus in v. 3, takes up his dialogue partner's words and tries to show his ability to reason. Yet whereas Jesus reframes the issue with Nicodemus' words, Nicodemus only demonstrates his incredulity, further emphasizing his desire to maintain an earthly perspective on things.⁵⁹ Two elements of his question color it as an unwillingness to accept Jesus' words: πῶς δύναται . . .; and μὴ . . .; The first asks a question that views Jesus' statement as ludicrous. The latter, a question expecting a negative answer (“Surely he cannot . . ., can he?”), likewise implies that Nicodemus cannot accept what Jesus has said as valid. As Chrysostom puts it, Nicodemus here drags down Jesus' sublime teaching to the lowliness of the fleshly perspective.⁶⁰ Nicodemus recognizes that one interpretation of Jesus' statement amounts to absurdity, but his incapacity to see the truth in the “absurdity” highlights his need for further instruction.⁶¹

So, the adaptable guide clarifies his words, yet only little by little—fuller clarification for Nicodemus will come only when he lets go of his earthly perspective. Jesus' second answer in v. 5, like his first, does not directly respond to Nicodemus' statement in v. 4, but adopts the other's words to make his own point:

Nicodemus: Πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος γεννηθῆναι γέρων ὢν; μὴ δύναται εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ δευτέρον εἰσελθεῖν καὶ γεννηθῆναι; (v. 4)

59 Stibbe, *John's Gospel*, 54, rightly calls Nicodemus “an inveterate literalist” based on this response.

60 *Hom. Jo.* 24.3 (PG 59.146).

61 As Neyrey (“John 3: A Debate over Johannine Epistemology and Christology,” *NovT* 23 [1981]: 119) helpfully points out, however, “The fact that he must now *ask a question* demonstrates that he does *not* possess certain knowledge,” as he presumed to have in v.2.

Jesus: ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω σοι, ἐὰν μή τις γεννηθῇ ἐξ ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος, οὐ δύναται εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. (v. 5)

Not only does Jesus use the same words as Nicodemus in v. 4, in particular εἰσελθεῖν, but he also rephrases his own statement by presenting in his second a parallel structure. Thus, birth ἄνωθεν becomes synonymous with being born “of water and Spirit.”⁶² This refers, in all likelihood, to the rite of baptism and the subsequent reception of the Holy Spirit, events by which one can then perceive (ἰδεῖν; cf. v. 3) and enter into heavenly truth (“the kingdom of God”). In this, Jesus indicates that birth ἄνωθεν has nothing to do with some fleshly rebirth or reentry into the maternal womb. Rather, the birth of which Jesus speaks involves a radical reorientation of identity and perspective that leads to entry into salvation (cf. 10:9).⁶³ This teaching may be difficult, but it is by no means the absurdity Nicodemus presumed it to be.

But since Nicodemus failed to grasp the pithy first saying (v. 3), Jesus goes beyond parallelism and continues: “That which is born of (ἐκ) flesh is flesh, and that which is born of (ἐκ) the Spirit is spirit” (v. 6).⁶⁴ The implicit distinction between “above/below” and “heavenly/earthly” (among the other dualisms in John) now appears explicit via the contrast between flesh and Spirit. Such explicitness aims at drawing Nicodemus’ attention again to a higher plane, to indicate the true nature of the discourse.⁶⁵

Chrysostom believes Jesus’ next words come in response to Nicodemus’ unnarrated reaction to v. 6, as Jesus says: “Do not wonder . . .” (3:7a), with

62 Keck (“Derivation,” 276) rightly sees this as hendiadys for birth ἄνωθεν. Pace Hylan (*Imperfect Believers*, 30–31) who believes “water” as referring to birth, even though nowhere else in the Gospel is the case. The only possible parallel would be in 1:12–13, but there the Evangelist refers to birth ἐξ αἱμάτων rather than ἐξ ὕδατος.

63 Lincoln, *John*, 149, 151.

64 See Conway (*Men and Women*, 98): “[I]n the case of Nicodemus, who has been introduced as a man of authority and has presented himself as knowledgeable, his questions appear particularly ignorant [in light of the Samaritan woman]. In the end, Jesus confirms this impression; he responds quite differently to Nicodemus than he does to the Samaritan woman. Whereas in his conversation with the woman, Jesus takes a new tack to bring her to a point of understanding, here he virtually ignores Nicodemus’ comment, merely restating his initial proposition and then elaborating on it. He neither answers Nicodemus’ question, nor makes any effort to bring him along in the conversation.” Conway’s reading of ch. 3, however, fails to recognize what is seen more clearly in ch. 4, i.e., Jesus’ work as an adaptable guide.

65 See Chrysostom, (*Hom. Jo.* 26.1 [PG 59.153]), who inserts a paraphrase of Jesus’ intent here: “We are not dialoguing about the flesh, Nicodemus, but the Spirit.”

Nicodemus' incredulity prompting Jesus' statement.⁶⁶ While many commentators overlook this narrative clue to the interaction of the two speakers, such an attitude on Nicodemus' part would seem to correspond to his skepticism in v. 4, and also later in v. 9. Nevertheless, Jesus continues to clarify the matter for Nicodemus, now by building off of the notion of πνεῦμα. Yet this clever play on words is but a technique of the adaptable guide: Jesus makes use of a perceptible, earthly notion—the wind (πνεῦμα)—that nonetheless has an unsubstantial and imperceptible quality to it.⁶⁷

Metaphors and imagery often aid adaptable guides in helping students understand difficult or complex concepts.⁶⁸ In this case, the metaphor becomes particularly useful, since both the image and the wordplay straddle the two realms involved in Jesus' message, that which is below and that which is above.⁶⁹ Yet the intent is for the “earthly” to serve only as a launching pad for higher knowledge, for the hearer to leave behind the lesser truth in favor of the more sublime. These two levels pervade 3:8, making smooth English translation nearly impossible:

τὸ πνεῦμα ὅπου θέλει πνεῖ καὶ τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ ἀκούεις, ἀλλ' οὐκ οἶδας πόθεν ἔρχεται καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγει.⁷⁰

66 *Hom. Jo.* 26.1 (PG 59.153).

67 Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 26.1 (PG 59.154).

68 As noted earlier; cf. p. 82. In reflection on this particular metaphor, Dorothy Lee (*The Symbolic Narratives of the Fourth Gospel: The Interplay of Form and Meaning* [JSNTSup 95; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994], 49) writes: “Paradoxically, misunderstanding is a necessary stage in the development of the narrative. From a literary point of view, it is only through the collapse of the literal meaning that it is possible to reach the second level, the metaphorical understanding.”

69 Barrett, *St. John*, 211; Francis J. Moloney, *Belief in the Word: Reading the Fourth Gospel*, *John* 1–4 (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 114–115; Zumstein, *Jean* (1–12), 116.

70 This verse teems with weighty terms, in addition to the language of the Spirit: οἶδα, πόθεν, ποῦ, and ὑπάγω. Later on in the Gospel, Jesus will tell his Jewish interlocutors: “My witness is true, because I know whence I came and whither I go (οἶδα πόθεν ἦλθον καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγω). But you do not know whence I come or whither I go (ὁμεις δὲ οὐκ οἶδατε πόθεν ἔρχομαι ἢ ποῦ ὑπάγω)” (8:14; cf. 14:4, 5). One of the contested pieces of knowledge in John involves, as I noted in the previous chapter, Jesus' origins and destination. Here in 3:8, Jesus makes clear where Nicodemus falls (at present) with respect to true understanding of divine activity and life: he does not know.

On one level, Jesus asks Nicodemus to consider the wind, to recognize its inscrutability, and to transpose this experience onto his understanding of the work of the Spirit. At another level, however, Jesus reveals the logic of the movement of the Spirit.⁷¹ In other words, though Nicodemus may misunderstand the idea of being born “from above,” he can begin to understand it by looking at the wind and its mysteriousness. Yet in all of this, one thing remains clear: Nicodemus cannot hold to an earthly perspective, learned though he may be, if he desires to enter into (or see) the Kingdom of God. Jesus has therefore made use of misunderstanding in an attempt to lead him to such a realization.

The Offer of Living Water (4:10–15)

Nicodemus is not alone in his incapacity to comprehend John’s Jesus, though the woman is perhaps less liable for her inabilities than “a leader of the Jews.” The same fate of misunderstanding befalls the woman, whose perplexity is about to multiply significantly. While she is amazed that Jesus, a Jew, would ask her for a drink, Jesus intends to cause her even more confusion in order to jar her preconceptions further. Not only will she be asked to reevaluate the relationship between an individual Samaritan and a Jew, but also to reevaluate the very identity of this man before her. Yet she, like Nicodemus, will constantly refer things back to the earthly realm, and this will ultimately lead Jesus to change his method if she is going to advance. She requires a different path to knowledge and salvation than does Nicodemus.

After their first exchange, Jesus responds to the woman’s question (“How can you, a Jew . . .?”), and challenges—in a way different from his response to Nicodemus—the woman’s perception and understanding: “If you knew the gift of God (εἰ ᾔδεις τὴν δωρεάν τοῦ θεοῦ) and who it is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would ask him, and he would give you living water (ἔδωκεν ἄν σοι ὕδωρ ζῶν)” (4:10). While Nicodemus, as a leader of the Jews, claims to have knowledge where he has none, all the woman knows is that Jesus is a Jew, but nothing further. Jesus responds accordingly, guiding her in a way appropriate to the setting, making use of the terms “gift,” and “water” to advance the conversation, especially toward the issue of (eternal) life. The first connects two gifts of importance: that of Jacob giving the well to Joseph (cf. v. 5)—a fact to which the woman will refer (v. 12)—and that of Jesus’ own “gift.” The water, like the “gift,” ties in the physical reality with the heavenly one: the water from

71 The final phrase in 3:8, “so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit,” emphasizes that people who view those born of the Spirit from an earthly perspective cannot understand what they do or where their final destination lies (see Lincoln, *John*, 151).

the well sustains life, even as Jesus' own offer of "water" will enable life. Yet even what Jesus means by "life"—like his notion of the gift and the water—exceed greatly what the woman first perceives, as his gift not only sustains life, but leads to *eternal* life (as he will make clear in v. 14). In so drawing upon these concepts at the start, Jesus is laying the foundation to move the woman little by little, or in Chrysostom's terminology, *κατὰ μικρὸν*.⁷² This playful use of these images and even his initial request for a drink are all aimed at evoking within her the very questions that she does not yet know to ask.

Her response reveals that the scandal of the interaction between the Jew and the Samaritan has passed, and the woman takes up a bit more initiative in reaction to Jesus' statement.⁷³ Here, she responds not by making assertions or by noting the absurdity of Jesus' comments, as Nicodemus did (cf. 3:2, 5). Instead, she asks questions, questions that move the conversation forward as much as Jesus' own: "Sir (κύριε)"—the address itself an indication of growth in perception⁷⁴—"you have no bucket, and the well is deep. From where (πόθεν) do you have this living water (τὸ ὕδωρ τὸ ζῶν)? You are not greater than our father Jacob (τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰακώβ), are you, who gave (ἔδωκεν) the well to us and from which he, his children (οἱ υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ), and his livestock drank?" (4:11–12). She responds with several words significant for the Gospel's theology, and such keywords provide much of the basis for the remainder of the dialogue.⁷⁵ Yet, like Nicodemus, her meaning still focuses on earthly matters.⁷⁶

72 See *Hom. Jo.* 33.2 (PG 59.190–191). See also his comments in *Hom. Jo.* 32.1 (PG 59.183): "Reflect on the Wisdom of Christ, how He drew the woman upward gradually (πῶς ἡρέμα ἀνάγει τὸ γύναιον). He did not say from the outset, 'If you knew who it is who says to you, "Give me a drink,"' but when He had furnished her with a pretext to call Him a Jew and she had brought the charge against Him, He then said this to refute the accusation. Further, when He had said: 'If you knew who it is who says to you, "Give me a drink," you, perhaps, would have asked of him,' and by promising great things had caused her to make mention of the patriarch, He thus caused the woman to understand more clearly."

73 O'Day's implied claim ("John," 567) that the woman's initiative makes her somehow superior to Nicodemus, however, would skew the point I am trying to make here. That is, "superiority" is somewhat beside the point, since both Nicodemus and the woman respond to Jesus, who leads them in ways appropriate to each—Nicodemus through ἀπορία, and the woman *κατὰ μικρὸν*.

74 Brown, *John*, 1.170.

75 The term πόθεν suggests the issue of Jesus' origins, and while the woman does not talk about those origins, Jesus' identity and origins underlie the dialogue (cf. O'Day, *Revelation*, 61). Furthermore, 3:16, 35–36 introduced the complex of ideas surrounding "father," "son," and "gift" language. Again, the woman would have no awareness of these thoughts, but they certainly hold significance for the audience who has just heard these words.

76 Contra Hylen, *Imperfect Believers*, 45–47, who argues that the woman is here engaging subtly in a debate regarding religious authority. (Origen, too, read the passage in a similar

Hope remains for the woman, however, since her initial misunderstanding has led her to ask questions that will prompt Jesus to guide her perception toward sublime truth. This recalls Theophrastus' *Progymnasmata*, wherein he prescribed to teachers: "Everything should not be elaborated in detail, but some things should be left for the hearer to know and to reason out by himself; for recognizing what has been left out, he becomes not only your hearer but your 'witness,' and a very friendly one too."⁷⁷ Jesus displays such wisdom, and puts it to good use here.

In a manner not unlike his response to Nicodemus' initial misunderstanding to his imagery (3:6–8), Jesus again expands upon his elevated language to make clearer that he speaks not about things from a fleshly, but rather a heavenly perspective. He makes this clear by contrasting those who drink from *this* water (ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος τούτου) and those who drink from the water he gives (ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος οὗ δώσω; 4:13–14a), that the thirst of the former will return, but the latter will never thirst again (οὐ μὴ διψήσῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα; v. 14b).⁷⁸ Jesus is addressing realities above earthly life, pointing to experiences that far outstrip mundane ones. Though the woman has already indicated the extraordinary—if not miraculous—nature of the well in Jacob's day (v. 12),⁷⁹ Jesus describes the exponentially greater gift that becomes in the recipient "a well of water, springing up to eternal life" (v. 14b).⁸⁰ As elsewhere in the Gospel, Jesus has answered the question "You are not greater than X, are you?" with an emphatic, if implicit, "Yes, I am."⁸¹

way; *Comm. Jo.* 13.23–25.) Yet, like those who see sexual undertones in the dialogue, Hylen's interpretation makes the passage read unlike other Johannine dialogues. In attempting to portray the woman as knowledgeable, she overlooks the overwhelming tendency for Johannine characters to be in the dark—at least initially—and to misunderstand Jesus' words.

77 Cited in and translated by George A. Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 85.

78 Cf. Origen, who reads the well as referring to human understanding in contrast to the water of Jesus (= the Spirit): "And consider if one can call human wisdom not false teachings, but the elementary aspects of the truth, and the things that apply to those who are still men. The things that are learned of the Spirit, on the other hand, are perhaps the fountains of water that leaps into eternal life" (*Comm. Jo.* 13.75–76).

79 Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John: Based on the Revised Standard Version* (NCBC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1981), 182.

80 In 4:14b, Jesus uses an unexpected verb in describing the kind of water he gives. The verb ἄλλομαι does not appear as an action of water in LXX, but rather as an action of the πνεῦμα κυρίου/θεοῦ (Judg. 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Sam. 10:10; 16:13; cf. Wis. 18:15). In light of these texts, the close tie between water and the Spirit established in 3:5 is only further reinforced here.

81 Cf. 8:53. Throughout the Gospel, the Evangelist makes more subtle contrasts with Moses and John the Baptist, though the net result is the same in affirming Jesus' superiority to

The woman's reaction to this comes with ambiguous results: "Sir (κύριε), give me this water (δός μοι τοῦτο τὸ ὕδωρ), in order that I might not thirst . . ." (v. 15). If the woman had stopped here, readers could reasonably claim that the woman has ascended with Jesus to perceive the sublime truths. Not only has she maintained the positive address of κύριε, but she even echoes Jesus' initial request to her (δός μοι πειν; v. 7), and in this way suggests that the dialogue has come full circle from Jesus' request for water. The woman, inquisitive and willing to move beyond traditional social boundaries, would have succeeded in receiving Jesus' testimony about earthly things. Yet such hopes collapse with the woman's final words: "Give me this water, so that . . . I might not have to come here (ἐνθάδε) to draw" (v. 15). She misperceives what Jesus has said to her even though she has said the right words, and so Jesus will have to try another approach.⁸²

In the second portion of both of these dialogues, the conversations both make progress, though they each do so via misunderstanding. This misunderstanding is not in either case simply aimed at demonstrating Jesus as otherworldly, though such is indeed a component of this means of communication.⁸³ Rather, the misunderstanding leads both the Samaritan woman and Nicodemus to inquire further, to ask for clarification and further instruction. Such mysterious language highlights also their respective incapacity to grasp Jesus' words, and so becomes a summons for a reorientation of their perceptive frameworks. In other words, misunderstanding here serves as a call to be born ἄνωθεν and to ask for living water. Yet in these sections, the misunderstanding does not dissipate, but rather heightens. For Nicodemus, this is precisely the point; but for the Samaritan woman, such misapprehension of his words merely gets in the way of his goals, and so the guide must dispense with his metaphor.

all revered figures in Israel's past and present. Alicia Myers notes that this is the rhetorical element of *synrkisis*, which heightens Jesus' own stature vis-à-vis ancient, revered figures like Moses or Jacob (*Characterizing Jesus: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Fourth Gospel's Use of Scripture in Its Presentation of Jesus* [LNTS 458; London: T & T Clark, 2012], 92–96).

82 Attridge, "Samaritan Woman," 275; Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 252. O'Day, *Revelation* (passim), notes throughout this passage the way in which the Evangelist deploys irony to portray Jesus as the heavenly Revealer. John's Revealer brings a message that confounds earthly modes of thinking, and so irony must be used to undermine such earthly categories in order to help people see and understand the reality about which Jesus speaks. O'Day's work, and the similar work of Paul Duke (*Irony in the Fourth Gospel*), both point to a key element within Johannine thought. Yet when the Gospel narrative is read as a portrayal of Jesus as an adaptable guide, irony—while still important—becomes but one mode of discourse and one psychological tool among many.

83 Meeks, "Man from Heaven," 53–57.

The Pivotal Statements: Incredulity and Dawning Recognition

In each of these dialogues, Jesus and his interlocutors make major statements that redirect the flow of their conversations. These “pivots,” as it were, lead to revelation, even if of very different sorts. Equally important is the way in which these turns in the conversations reveal Jesus’ aims for the very different individuals before him. Nicodemus, learned and influential, presuming to understand, comes to the place where he cannot proceed further—ἀπορία. The woman, without Nicodemus’ advantages, also finds herself in the same place. Jesus’ aims for each character, however, require him to respond to each one’s epistemological impasse differently: Nicodemus must recognize that he has to change his perspective, to be born from above, if he is to receive anything Jesus has to offer. Meanwhile, the Samaritan seems somewhat willing to advance, but she knows not how. In the pivotal section of her encounter with Jesus, then, he will have to guide her by a different route.

Stupor and the Spur (3:9–12)

The metaphor of the Spirit/wind had the capacity of drawing Nicodemus’ understanding to a higher level, but Nicodemus insists on maintaining his earthly perspective, as shown in his exasperated response to all that Jesus has uttered: “How can these things be (πῶς δύναται ταῦτα γενέσθαι)?” (v. 9). From an earthly perspective, one rooted in the experience of the flesh, what Jesus has said makes no sense.⁸⁴ It reinforces the understanding of Nicodemus’ character outlined above: his overreliance on his current perspective and learning keeps him from moving forward, and he thus remains incredulous. This bewildered statement belies his cognitive state: he has reached ἀπορία, and he can no longer engage in this dialogue unless he allows himself to accept Jesus’ words. In this way, Jesus has led Nicodemus to a place of decision through his ἐλεγχος: no longer able to rely upon learning, privilege, or authority, Nicodemus must either adopt this new perspective or give up and leave.

The guide wields the spur one last time on his interlocutor: “*You* are the teacher of Israel, and you do not know these things (σὺ εἶ ὁ διδάσκαλος τοῦ

84 Bultmann, *John*, 142–143; Moloney, *John*, 93–94; Conway, *Men and Women*, 100; Zumstein, *Jean* (1–12), 117. Especially advocating this position is Meeks, “Man from Heaven,” 57, yet I part with Meeks on the point that this incomprehensibility primarily serves a function outside of the narrative itself.

Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ταῦτα οὐ γινώσκεις)!” (v. 10).⁸⁵ Here, the Johannine Jesus shows the art with which he can turn Nicodemus’ words back on him, in order to dismantle the other’s claims to knowledge.⁸⁶ Not only does Jesus repeat Nicodemus’ “these things,” but also recalls his opening line: “We *know* that you have come from God as a *teacher* (οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀπὸ θεοῦ ἐλήλυθας διδάσκαλος)” (v. 2).⁸⁷ Nicodemus claims to know about Jesus’ identity, but he cannot even grasp what he, as ὁ διδάσκαλος τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ, should know, i.e., the truth about birth ἄνωθεν or the nature of the Spirit. Moreover, Jesus sharpens his response to Nicodemus in two subtle ways: the use of the pronoun σὺ and the addition of the article (compare v. 2, “a teacher” with v. 10, “*the* teacher,” and of *Israel*, no less).⁸⁸ These changes heighten the absurdity of the situation, but unlike Nicodemus’ attempt to point out an absurdity (v. 4), Jesus lands his punch.

At this point, Jesus changes tack, though only slightly. He moves away from metaphor and ambiguity to address Nicodemus more directly. In vv. 11–12, he lays out the problem clearly: Jesus has spoken of what he knows (ὃ οἶδαμεν

85 Here I follow Michaels (*The Gospel of John* [NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010], 189) in reading this as a statement of wonder rather than a question, though even as a question Jesus’ reaction rings with affected astonishment. See also Duke, *Irony*, 45–46, for a blow-by-blow of the biting irony in this response: “there are overtones of irony in virtually every word of this piercing question. The irony is achieved by word position (*su, ginoskeis*), by repetition and near-repetition of Nicodemus’ words (*didaskalos, tauta, ginoskeis*), by the use of the definite article, and by use of theological double meaning (*tou Israel*). The remark poses two elements incongruous with each other, the second effectively negating the first. Jesus appears to order deference, but in fact he offers judgment. He is here the classic *eiron*, ‘praising in order to blame,’ raising his eyebrows as he raises a question.”

86 Again, see Duke (*Irony*, 45): “Jesus here seems to be feigning surprise at Nicodemus’ bewilderment. A classic Socratic pose is struck in such a question, and the subtle, needling word-play is exquisite.” Cf. Gail R. O’Day, “John,” in *NIB 9: Luke, John* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1995), 551.

87 The parallel between vv. 2 and 10 is in no way diminished by the use of γινώσκω and οἶδα, as the Evangelist’s style often alternates two synonymous words for the same idea, and little should be made out of this. A good, but by no means only example of this variation in terms is in 21:15–19, where both the terms for “love” and “sheep” alternate several times.

88 Many (e.g., Michaels, *John*, 189) have noted the odd use of the definite article before διδάσκαλος, and have suggested that it emphasizes Nicodemus’ reputation as a leading teacher among the Jewish people. This may in fact be the point the Evangelist is trying to make, but evidence for this reading is too thin. At any rate, the gentive phrase τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ adds the most punch, stressing that while Nicodemus is a ruler of the Jews (v. 1), he cannot claim to be a teacher of Israel without knowledge concerning the things of which Jesus speaks.

λαλοῦμεν) and has witnessed (and, subsequently, so do his followers), while people like Nicodemus refuse to accept it (v. 11), since acceptance would require a change of perspective, i.e., birth from above.⁸⁹ Yet what Jesus has spoken has, up to this point, amounted only to “earthly things” (τὰ ἐπίγεια): “How (πῶς; see v. 9) will you believe if I tell you about heavenly things (τὰ ἐπουράνια)?”⁹⁰

The subject of the dialogue has, until v. 12, focused almost entirely on what happens on the human level, which, as Van der Watt argues, amounts to τὰ ἐπίγεια.⁹¹ The contrast becomes clearer when looking at the verbs, since in the protasis of v. 12 the verbs εἶπον and πιστεύετε occur in the aorist and present, suggesting that Jesus has already told Nicodemus the earthly things, and Nicodemus currently does not believe them.⁹² These things Nicodemus should have understood clearly, particularly if he believed indeed that Jesus was a divinely approved teacher.⁹³ Yet Jesus now begins to speak of the commission and exaltation of the Son, or the process of salvation seen “from above.” As such, one can properly say that Jesus will speak in vv. 13–21 of τὰ ἐπουράνια.

89 Bennema (*Encountering Jesus*, 150–151) suggests that the plurals in this verse, and indeed throughout the dialogue, indicate a conversation between two teachers in front of their disciples, developing this from a tradition that nighttime was the time in which to study and debate Torah. Such a reading of the text is creative, but the notion of this dialogue occurring on two levels (à la Martyn) provides a more compelling instance of the plurals in this dialogue (and throughout the Gospel) than does the supposition of the presence of Nicodemus’ disciples.

90 de Jonge (“Nicodemus and Jesus,” 38): “Now, if chapter 3 intends to give a deepening and correction of Nicodemus’s christology in vs. 2, vss. 3–10 are no more than an intermezzo, though a very appropriate and necessary one. They show the essential difference between the οἶδαμεν of Jesus, and of the Christian Church living in communion with him, and the οἶδαμεν of Nicodemus and the other Jews, unbelieving *and believing* (strangely enough).” I would modify this position somewhat to emphasize the fact that the “intermezzo” serves a greater function than simply distinguishing between two kinds of knowledge in the world *in front of* the text (the Johannine audience and their antagonists). As I have argued, equally important are the ways in which the characters *within* the text grapple with the two different kinds of knowing, in order that one (Nicodemus) might come to perceive things “from above.”

91 Van der Watt, “Knowledge,” 301–302. This same point is made in Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 27.1 (PG 59.157); Thyen, *Johannesevangelium* 200–201; and Zumstein, *Jean* (1–12), 117–118.

92 Van der Watt, “Knowledge,” 304.

93 Cornelis Bennema, *The Power of Saving Wisdom: An Investigation of Spirit and Wisdom in Relation to the Soteriology of the Fourth Gospel* (WUNT 11 148; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), 170, 175.

Jesus' pedagogical method has done its job: only *now*, at this point in the dialogue can Jesus turn away from confounding Nicodemus.⁹⁴ No longer does he need to speak so mysteriously and metaphorically of the work of salvation. Jesus has made the point, as Chrysostom recognizes, that Nicodemus cannot grasp his words by reason, but only by faith (= birth *ἄνωθεν*).⁹⁵ Nicodemus first had to come to the end of his ability to grasp Jesus' words through his own privileged position and knowledge, thinking of Jesus as a teacher like himself. Instead, he had to see that his knowledge and confidence amounted to nothing in the face of Jesus' message, and that Jesus' words came from a source of much greater authority than Nicodemus had imagined.

The exchange of vv. 2–12 has brought Nicodemus from a confident, privileged leader of Israel to someone who cannot understand even earthly analogs of heavenly truth. He has moved from assertions of knowledge to confessions of confoundedness. Yet this need not amount to a "victimization" of Nicodemus, at least not one that has only the reader's benefit at heart. Rather, Jesus, who in John exhibits not only omniscience but also beneficence and humility, works even here not to condemn the man but to save him. Again, this reading contrasts markedly with that of, say, Culpepper or Stibbe noted earlier, who recognize Jesus' elusiveness but not its educative function.⁹⁶ While the adaptable guide's approach in vv. 2–12 might seem harsh when applied in all times with all people, this method involving question, ambiguity, metaphor, and sharp irony uniquely suits Nicodemus' needs, at least the "Nicodemus" that the Evangelist has presented to his readers.

Adapting the Approach (4:16–19)

A marked departure from the dialogue with Nicodemus appears in 4:16–19. Like Nicodemus, up to this point the woman has failed to grasp Jesus' words about "living water." So Jesus responds to this lack of understanding with a change in tactics, a change whose purpose will only manifest itself with time.⁹⁷ Dropping the talk of water, he commands her to call her husband and "bring him here" (*ἐνθάδε*, v. 16). This odd transition has caused much confusion for discerning

94 Beirne (*Women and Men*, 84–85) rightly sees the discourse in 3:13–21 as building upon some of the major themes raised vv. 2–8, such as Jesus' origins (vv. 2, 13) and eternal life (vv. 3, 5, 15–16).

95 *Hom. Jo.* 27.1 (PG 59.157).

96 Again, see Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 110–112; Stibbe, *John's Gospel*, 55.

97 Zumstein, *Jean* (1–12), 151.

the flow of the passage.⁹⁸ Yet Botha has hit upon something important in his analysis that the woman's persistent misunderstanding (*sans* Nicodemus' incredulity) requires a new approach, a kind of flexibility befitting one who not only adapts to different people, but to changing circumstances.⁹⁹ On the surface, it may appear (to the woman) that Jesus invites not only her to drink, but also for her husband to drink from the living water he offers.

With the woman's answer and Jesus' response, however, this apparent motive fades and the audience can perceive Jesus' pedagogical and revelatory aim. She responds, famously (or infamously): "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You say well, 'I have no husband.' For you have had five husbands, and now the one you have is not your husband. You have stated the truth" (vv. 17–18).¹⁰⁰ Does this revelation have to do with exposing the woman's sinfulness or show her how desperately she, a sinner, needed the life-giving water Jesus offered?¹⁰¹ The Evangelist offers no such hint that either of these purposes lies behind Jesus' response. While the Synoptic Jesus at times shows concern over the sins of individuals (e.g., Matt. 9:2; Luke 7:48), the Johannine Jesus talks not about the sin of a single person, but rather of humanity *in toto*

98 E.g., Bultmann, *John*, 187; Lindars, *John*, 184–185; Donald A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John: An Introduction and Commentary* (PNTC; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991), 202; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003), 1.605–606.

99 Eugene Botha, "John 4:16: A Difficult Text: Speech Act Theoretically Revisited," *Scriptura* 35 (1990): 1–9. See also Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 165.

100 In addition to the more literal reading suggested here, there have been proposed an array of allegorical readings of the five husbands, and the evidence for such reading extends as early as Origen (*Comm. Jo.* 13.51; he also notes Heracleon's allegorical interpretation in 13.71–72). Most popular among allegorical readings is that the "five husbands" represent the five gods worshipped by the Samaritans, and 2 Kg 17:24–41; Ezra 4:1–4 are brought in as evidence. Yet, despite Lincoln's desire to have it both ways (*John*, 176), a symbolic reading remains too subject to the interpreters whims; see Okure, *The Johannine Approach to Mission*, 111; Michaels, *John*, 247; Beutler, *Johannesevangelium*, 161.

101 Not only do such questions have a long pedigree, but they also appear in many recent works on John 4, such as in Carson, *John*, 202. But Bultmann shows much discretion when he says, "There is no point, as far as the traditional material is concerned, in asking when Jesus tells the woman to fetch her husband, or what purpose would be served by his arrival on the scene. For, as is shown in what follows, Jesus' request is only a means of demonstrating his own omniscience. The story represents Jesus as the *προφήτης*, as the *θεῖος ἄνθρωπος* who knows the secret things which are hidden from other men, and who knows the strangers whom he meets" (*John*, 187–188).

(cf. 1:29; 3:19–20; 8:21, 34; 9:41).¹⁰² Since the Evangelist does not, either through the narrator or Jesus, offer any sort of evaluative comment about the woman's past, positive or negative, one must look elsewhere for explanation for Jesus' introduction of this topic. John Chrysostom points to such an explanation: In response to Jesus' exposure of her life,

She did not show resentment, nor leave Him and run away, nor think the whole affair a disgrace; rather, she marveled at Him and persevered more, for she said: "I see that you are a prophet" [4:19] . . . Do you perceive how she had grown more exalted in mind? She who at first was concerned about not being troubled by thirst now even asked questions about religious teachings.¹⁰³

Jesus has enabled the woman to see, if ever so briefly, that he is more than a Jewish man in need of a drink.¹⁰⁴

The woman's response to Jesus' revelation, like so much of her speech to this point, teems with key Johannine terms, yet here the Evangelist has her say the words with less irony: "Sir, I see that you are a prophet (κύριε, θεωρῶ ὅτι προφήτης εἶ σύ)" (v. 19). The importance of her calling Jesus "sir/Lord" (κύριε) has been already noted, and here her understanding of his identity moves forward several steps. She invokes her perception with the term θεωρέω, a verb frequently appearing with connotations of positive perception of Jesus' works and identity.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, she perceives Jesus' identity as a prophet: like Nicodemus (3:2), this confession of his identity falls short of reality, yet Jesus has advanced remarkably in this woman's perception from "Jew" to "Sir," and now to "prophet."¹⁰⁶ This leap of understanding only occurred with Jesus' change of approach, which shows the marks of a skilled guide.

At the turn of the two dialogues, what originally seemed like parallel conversations now appears more contrasted, and this contrast illustrates the adapting approaches of Jesus with his counterparts. The tool of misunder-

102 Interestingly, in John it is the *opponents* of Jesus, rather than Jesus himself, who concern themselves with the sinful disposition of others (especially Jesus); see 5:18; 8:41; 9:24, 34; 10:33.

103 *Hom. Jo.* 32.2–3 (PG 59.186).

104 So Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 253.

105 Cf. 6:2, 19, 40, 62; 12:45; 14:19; 17:24. But, see 2:23; 20:6, 12, 14. The Evangelist does not use this verb in an unequivocally positive way, as with so many verbs of perception. Nevertheless, here it indicates a growing awareness of who Jesus is.

106 Brown, *John*, 1.170–171; Lindars, *John*, 187. This progression is also noted in Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 13.75–76, though he also notes the title's insufficiency as a confession.

standing worked with Nicodemus to bring him to the point of admitting his confusion, a necessary step for him if he is to reevaluate his perspective of Jesus (and indeed all things), to admit emphatically that he does *not* know anything about Jesus (cf. 3:2). Jesus also prodded Nicodemus even further by challenging him to accept what Jesus said, to recognize that he alone had a true knowledge of τὰ ἐπουρανία. This tool of misunderstanding only got in the way, however, of the woman's progress, and so Jesus used a different method, that of demonstrating his prophetic ability, which was more effective in helping her advance. The woman and Nicodemus have both arrived at a place where they can now receive more fruitfully Jesus' revelation, which Jesus will now offer each of them.

The Discourses: Jesus' Origins and True Worship

That the Johannine Jesus will expound heavenly truths to both his conversation partners, however, in no way means that he will leave behind his psychagogy. Instead, as he turns to offer to them sublime revelation, he will speak appropriately to each one. In 3:13–21, Jesus will talk about his origins and his mission primarily in terms of descent and ascent, salvation and judgment. This way of describing these sublime realities is particularly suited for Nicodemus, since it makes the decision to accept or reject Jesus quite plain. But in 4:20–26, Jesus' discourse has more to do with the nature of worship and the idea of fatherhood, topics particularly appropriate for the Samaritan woman, whose people look to their father Jacob (and other "fathers") for legitimacy of their form of worship, which diverges from that of the Jews.

The Nature of Jesus' Testimony and Mission (3:13–21)

After v. 10, and certainly after v. 12, the dialogue with Nicodemus turns into a full-fledged monologue. This does not necessarily mean that Nicodemus has "disappeared" offstage, as some have suggested.¹⁰⁷ In many of the Johannine discourses, Jesus' words close the scene without reference to his interlocutors' reactions, and with the close of the pericope signaled only by a transitional phrase, such as the μετὰ ταῦτα of 3:22 (also 6:1; 7:1; cf. 12:36b; 13:1). In 5:19–47, for example, Jesus is clearly discoursing with the Jews mentioned in 5:16–18, and their follow-up to Jesus' words remains unnarrated, not unlike Nicodemus here. Moreover, as Van der Watt has shown, while verses 3:1–8 focus on the anthropological side of salvation (τὰ ἐπιγεια), vv. 13–21 address soteriology

107 So Brown, *John*, 1:144–145; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 135; Beutler, *Johannesevangelium*, 138.

from the heavenly perspective, i.e., the Father and Son's actions that lead to human salvation (τὰ ἐπουράνια).¹⁰⁸ In other words, Jesus does not change subject here, but only changes the point of view—something understandable were Jesus continuing an earlier conversation rather than discoursing *de novo*. Thus, while Nicodemus no longer speaks after v. 9, at the narrative level only Nicodemus could hear the words of vv. 10–21, and understanding this also sheds light on particular aspects of Jesus' teaching that follows.¹⁰⁹ And, as I have shown above, it is precisely at this point that Nicodemus can best receive the revelation that Jesus will offer.

In 3:13–15, Jesus contrasts his own origins and dignity with all those who have come before, and he especially targets figures in Israel's past—Moses in particular—who have been said to ascend to heaven.¹¹⁰ In truth, no one can, according to the Johannine Jesus, claim to have ascended to heaven, as only Jesus has seen and been commissioned by the Father.¹¹¹ This continues the notion of birth “from above” and the earlier problem of Nicodemus' earthly perspective. Such a claim also directly targets Nicodemus, a man presumably steeped in Israel's religious traditions and who revered Moses, and encourages him to reformulate his understanding of the source of divine truth: no longer originating from Moses and the Law, but from Jesus and the Spirit.

The contrast in vv. 14–15 further reinforces this claim: “Just as Moses lifted up (ὑψώσεν) the snake in the desert, so also must the Son of Man be lifted up (ὑψωθῆναι δεῖ), in order that everyone who believes in him might have eternal life.” The reference to Moses' snake recalls Num. 21:4–9, in which people afflicted by poison could look upon a bronze snake on a pole and live.¹¹² Yet, as Chrysostom notes, the Israelites eventually succumbed to mortality. Jesus' act of being “lifted up,” however, cures a greater ill with a stronger therapy: “In the former instance, the Jews escaped death, but it was temporal death; in the latter instance, the faithful escape eternal death.”¹¹³ It should not be overlooked that Jesus makes this contrast here, speaking to a teacher and leader among the Jewish people, between Moses' supposed heavenly ascent and Jesus' earthly

108 Van der Watt, “Knowledge,” *passim*.

109 *Contra* Conway, *Men and Women*, 100–101.

110 Meeks, “Man from Heaven,” 52; Barrett, *St. John*, 177; Lincoln, *John*, 152.

111 Cf. 1:1–2, 14, 18; 3:32; 5:37.

112 For a thorough discussion on this image in John, as well as the background to the image, see James H. Charlesworth, *The Good and Evil Serpent: The Symbolism and Meaning of the Serpent in the Ancient World* (AYBRL; New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2010), 352–415.

113 *Hom. Jo.* 27.2 (PG 59.159).

descent, and between Moses' temporary salvific act and Jesus' gift of eternal life. Jesus has carefully adapted his message for this particular audience.

Jesus' discussion of "heavenly things" before his audience of one ends with a summons, one particularly suited to a person already characterized as somewhat fearful and, as the Gospel shows, hesitant to make a bold association with the man Jesus. In vv. 18–21, Jesus outlines the reality of judgment (κρίσις) for those who refuse to believe, who love darkness more than light, and who try to keep their deeds hidden. Clement notes, tying this verse to the parable of the vine in John 15: "The punishments that are inflicted on those who sin aim at their salvation. *The Word adapts Himself* (μεθαρμοζομένου) *completely to the disposition of each, being strict with one, forgiving another.*"¹¹⁴ Jesus brings up the notion of judgment here because this is what Nicodemus must hear in order to draw closer to the light. This section of the discourse indeed teems with the contrast between darkness and light, a contrast already intimated in the introduction of the dialogue (ἦλθεν πρὸς αὐτὸν νυκτὸς, v. 2a). Nicodemus, whose identity remains ambiguous throughout the entire Gospel narrative, shows himself as one uniquely in need of hearing these very words from Jesus in which Jesus offers him a clear invitation to come to the light, or face divine discipline.¹¹⁵

Telling Her All Things (4:20–26)

The focus of Jesus' revelation in this passage falls on very different issues than those raised by the conversation with Nicodemus. At this point in the dialogue, Jesus' maneuvers in his conversation with the woman have yielded not only her recognition that he is a prophet, but it also reverses their roles seen up to this point. Since 4:7, Jesus has driven the conversation, while the woman has reacted to his words. After vv. 17–18, however, the woman begins to advance

¹¹⁴ *Paed.* 1.8.66.5 (Wood, FC), emphasis added.

¹¹⁵ On this point, Chrysostom contrasts Jesus' teaching to Nicodemus with that to Nathanael, showing why the topic of judgment fit the one and not the other: "Now, why do you think He did not speak about these matters [of judgment and incarnation] to Nathanael, to whom also He revealed truth . . . ? Because not even he came to Him with such eagerness [as that of Nicodemus]. . . . To Nicodemus, however, He said none of these things [cf. 1:51], but discoursed about the Incarnation and everlasting life, speaking differently to each one, according to the disposition of each. Since the first was versed in the sayings of the Prophets and was not so fearful, it was sufficient for him to hear only as much as he did. But since the latter was still held back by fear, He prudently did not reveal everything to him, but stirred his mind so as to cast out fear by fear, by saying that he who does not believe is judged and that persistence in unbelief proceeds from the consciousness of a wicked life" (*Hom. Jo.* 28.3 [PG 59.165–166]).

the dialogue.¹¹⁶ Her awareness of Jesus' omniscience about her life has enabled her to glimpse some of the sublime truth to which Jesus earlier pointed with his metaphor of wells and water. Building off of her deepened respect and understanding of Jesus, the woman turns her attention to the question of true worship (v. 20): whose liturgical traditions have the greatest authenticity, the Samaritans or the Jews?¹¹⁷

Significantly, she frames the question as a contrast between "our fathers (οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν)" and "you (ὕμεις)," a contrast Jesus uses to his full advantage. While the woman has asked about worship without respect to the *object* of worship,¹¹⁸ Jesus tells her, "The hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you (plural) worship the Father (προσκυνήσετε τῷ πατρί). You worship what you do not know (ὕμεις προσκυνεῖτε δὲ οὐκ οἴδατε); we worship what we know (οἴδαμεν), for salvation is from the Jews (ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων)" (v. 21–22).¹¹⁹ Jesus has taken up the woman's "us and them" dichotomy and has flipped it on its head. Whereas the woman prioritized her own people's traditions by referencing "our fathers," Jesus speaks of those who worship "the Father," and in addition brings the Jewish knowledge of God into the discussion as a way to undermine the woman's privileging of Samaritan traditions.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Bultmann, *John*, 189.

¹¹⁷ Many have noted the woman's apparent change of subject here, and some have suggested that this is an attempt to divert attention from the issue of her morality. Nevertheless, the majority of more recent interpreters have moved away from this position, summed up nicely by Schnackenburg (*St. John*, 1.434): "Nothing is said of the woman's emotional reactions; the evangelist is not concerned with her psychology or feelings, but with her growing faith. Hence her words are not to be taken as a manoeuvre, steering the conversation away from a painful subject, but as a continuation of the dialogue, in which a religious question is discussed." In this way, my reading of John 4 as an example of the psychagogy of the Johannine Jesus does not stand in opposition to the best of contemporary scholarship, but rather enhances it and gives it a framework with which John can be understood more integrally.

¹¹⁸ As O'Day notes, "The Samaritan/Jewish conflict so dominates the woman's perspective that her words to Jesus (v. 20) contain *no reference to who is being worshipped*" ("John," 578; emphasis added).

¹¹⁹ This use of ἐκ stands somewhat apart from its usage elsewhere, such as Nicodemus' status as ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων (3:1). Rather, here it seems to suggest, even temporarily, that the source of salvation—that is, Jesus—originates among the Jewish people.

¹²⁰ Yet even this privileging of Jewish traditions is temporary at best, as Michaels (*John*, 252) points out the heavy irony: nowhere else in the Gospel does the Evangelist or Jesus praise the Jewish people or the authorities for their adequate knowledge of God. On the contrary, the Jewish people most frequently serve as the representatives for the world ignorant of its creator (cf. 1:10).

This reversal of the woman's categories, giving pride of place to Jewish traditions, disappears as quickly as it came. Jesus, having disrupted the woman's categories, can now transcend them: "The hour is coming, and now is, when the true (ἀληθινοὶ) worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth (ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ); for the Father seeks such as these as those who worship him" (v. 23). Jesus continues by pointing the woman beyond earthly distinctions of ethnic groups and their religious traditions to the truth that transcends every gender, social, and ethnic category. As the woman has recalled her father/fathers (4:12, 20), Jesus now points her to consider what his Father desires, and encourages her to pursue this rather than the traditions of her ancestors. In particular, this revelation, which pertains to the Jewish/Samaritan debate over worship and the idea of fatherhood, Jesus chooses as the most appropriate one to give to the woman.

The woman's understanding of Jesus' identity and message has undergone a major evolution. With his response to her question regarding worship, his challenge to and transcendence of her categories of thought, she now comes to the periphery of sublime truth. She reveals now, however tentatively, her dawning realization of who stands before her: "I know (οἶδα)¹²¹ that the Messiah, who is called Christ, is coming. When he comes, he will explain all things to us (ἀναγγελεῖ ἡμῖν ἅπαντα)" (v. 25).¹²² She does not quite confess Jesus to be the Messiah, though the hint of her suspicion is clear. Nevertheless, the adaptable guide aims for progress over perfection, and this woman has continued to advance in her estimation of Jesus' identity and has positively responded to Jesus' attempts to point her gaze upward.

Her suspicion that Jesus is, in fact, the awaited Messiah pales in comparison to the true identity of the man at the well, and he draws her ever further with the pregnant admission: ἐγώ εἰμι, ὁ λαλῶν σοι (v. 26).¹²³ While the

121 Thyen (*Johannesevangelium*, 264) notes the way in which the woman takes up Jesus' words ("If you knew . . .") and then states confidently what she knows. He also stresses that here she abandons both the reference to the "father" and to Samaritan practice, and so she begins to steer the conversation in the direction to which Jesus has been driving all along.

122 Scholars have long understood the woman's statement within its historical setting to mean the Samaritan belief in the *Taheb* (or *Ta'eb*), an approximate equivalent to the "prophet-like-Moses" expectation that permeates so much of the Fourth Gospel (see Schnackenburg, *St. John*, 1.441). The identification between the *Taheb* and the Jewish Messiah apparently suggested here, however, is a scholarly guess based on scanty evidence (Barrett, *St. John*, 200).

123 Thyen (*Johannesevangelium*, 266) points out that this creates a sort of *inclusio* with v. 10: the τίς ἐστίν is answered by ἐγώ εἰμι.

woman presumably fails to recognize the depth of his statement—which sounds remarkably like Isa. 52:6, further suggesting his divine origins and identity¹²⁴—she does respond positively to it, and with the revelation of his identity she leaves the well and departs for the city. Many interpreters have rightly noted that the act of leaving the water jar (ὕδριον) indicates the woman's recognition that the water of which Jesus spoke had little to do with the well upon which he sat, but rather had to do with the gift of eternal life he offered.¹²⁵ In this way, Jesus' change of tactic in v. 16 allowed the woman to move beyond misunderstanding and to recognize the heavenly meaning of the water he would give.

Jesus has given this revelation, moreover, only at the point when the woman could receive it. An adaptable teacher cannot underestimate the importance of good timing, as Chrysostom notes:

He did not start from it in speaking with her, but started with the water, and led her on by a prophecy—and so brought her to mention Christ—and then finally revealed Himself. If He had said this to the woman at the beginning, when she was not looking for it, He would have seemed foolish to her and to be talking nonsense. But now, by gradually (κατὰ μικρὸν) leading her to recall the Messiah, He revealed himself opportunely (εὐκαίρως).¹²⁶

Ephrem's interpretation of this passage stresses also this theme of progress:

Because she in her love said, 'The Messiah will come',
He revealed to her with love, 'I am He.'
That He was a prophet, she believed already,
soon after, that He was the Messiah . . .
. . . she is a type of our humanity
that He leads step by step.¹²⁷

Not only has Jesus accommodated the woman's particularity and the unfolding situation, but he has also withheld the most sublime truths until the woman could receive them. Thus, he roughly parallels here his dialogue with

124 LXX Isa. 52:6: διὰ τοῦτο γινώσεται ὁ λαὸς μου τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ, ὅτι ἐγὼ εἰμι αὐτὸς ὁ λαλῶν, πάρεμι. Noted also by Lincoln, *John*, 178; Zumstein, *Jean* (1–12), 157.

125 So John Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 34.1 (PG 59.193); cf. Michaels, *John*, 258–59.

126 *Hom. Jo.* 33.2 (PG 59.190–191).

127 *Virg.* 22.21; cited and translated in McVey, "St. Ephrem's," 121.

Nicodemus, only revealing the most sublime truths once his interlocutor was in a position to receive them. Jesus did not, then, aim in this dialogue to reveal the woman's sinfulness or engage in a religious debate, but instead sought to bring this woman to an understanding of his identity and mission, to produce in her understanding and faith. He could not achieve these aims through blunt declaration, but through careful attention to the woman's needs, and so produced the intended fruit.

In both dialogues, these moments of revelation have come only when Jesus has made his interlocutors ready, which reflects the care of an adept pedagogue. Nicodemus could not hear Jesus' words until he stopped presuming his earthly knowledge was sufficient. The Samaritan woman could not hear about worship or inter-ethnic issues from Jesus until she saw that he somehow transcended those issues. And Jesus' words were not haphazardly chosen, but his sublime teachings he directed to each audience, using those revelations to encourage in each person a positive response to the choice he lay before them. This choice, whether or not to accept Jesus' words and all they entail, is the choice to which the Johannine Jesus aims to bring all people.

What Then? The Responses of the Dialogue Partners

Nicodemus' Response (?)

Nicodemus must make the decision to adopt a new perspective, to be born from above, or to cling to the fleshly. He has seen that when it comes to heavenly truths, his privilege and prestige mean nothing. What he thinks he knows, especially about Jesus, has been shown inadequate from the perspective of the Spirit, and his earthly worldview makes the realm above unintelligible to him. He has the opportunity to pass from darkness to light, and from judgment to salvation. The major question at the end of 3:1–21, then, is this: what does he choose?

To be sure, Nicodemus does not in this passage express full comprehension and acceptance of Jesus' words, and the Evangelist does not indicate that he later came to such a place, at least not in so many words.¹²⁸ His later

¹²⁸ Some have tried to argue one way or another for Nicodemus' faith, though most recognize the paucity of evidence. Bassler ("Mixed Signals," 643) rightly confesses: "The data on Nicodemus thus refuses to fall neatly into place. In the initial scene, the tone of rejection dominates, but Nicodemus keeps coming back with actions and words that are amenable to various interpretations. Moreover, the author's hand is heavy in each scene, reminding the reader of earlier scenes and encouraging the reader to put together a pattern, but the

appearances in the Gospel are ambiguous at best (7:50–51; 19:39–42).¹²⁹ This fact does not nullify my claim that John portrays Jesus in 3:1–21 as an adaptable guide. It merely shows that the guide does not bear the full responsibility of effecting change within a student.¹³⁰ Yet Jesus has frequently spoken to Nicodemus in ways that, when viewed through the lens of adaptable psychagogy, all arise from a beneficent desire to bring Nicodemus from “below” to “above,” from “flesh” to “Spirit.” Jesus knows who Nicodemus is and what motivates him. He recognizes Nicodemus’ need to move from belief based on signs to a belief in Jesus as God’s Word in the flesh, the one who has come down from heaven.

The Samaritan’s Invitation (4:29–30, 40–42)

The Evangelist does narrate, however, the woman’s response, and, as Chrysostom notes, it contrasts strongly with Nicodemus’ “response”:

[T]he woman at once believed, and appeared wiser than Nicodemus; indeed, not only wiser, but even stronger. For, though he heard countless things of this kind, he neither summoned any other person to Christ, nor did he himself speak freely of Him; while she engaged in apostolic work, spreading the good news to all, and calling them to Jesus, drawing to Him a whole city from outside the faith.¹³¹

How she tells her fellow citizens about this strange man in their midst may sound, at first, like she has maintained the hesitancy of her “confession” of Jesus’ messianic identity in v. 25. In v. 29, she says, “Come, see a man who told me everything (πάντα; cf. v. 25) that I have done; this could not be the Christ, could it?” Her invitation (“Come, see”) echoes the calls from Jesus to John’s two disciples (1:39) and Philip’s response to Nathanael (1:46), which itself puts her

pattern never sheds its pervasive ambiguity. If anything, the ambiguity grows stronger, and this ambiguity arises at least in part because Nicodemus is persistently defined from two perspectives: his point of origin (the ‘Jews,’ Pharisees, night) and his present location (coming to Jesus, confessing him as ‘Teacher sent from God,’ defending him, and attending to his burial rites).” See also Culpepper, “Nicodemus,” 259.

129 Martyn, for his part, considered Nicodemus to represent one of the “secret believers,” and as such his faith is not expressly related in the Gospel (*History and Theology*, 88).

130 In the same way that, for example, Socrates attempted to bring many of his interlocutors to a truer perception of the world yet did not always succeed. Not many, I imagine, would attribute such “failures” to Socrates, but rather to the inability of the student to accept what had been shown to him.

131 *Hom. Jo.* 32.1 (PG 59.184).

lack of expressed certainty in a positive light.¹³² Yet I would hazard a further reason as to why she poses this question to her fellow Samaritans: she herself would not have positively responded to an outright confession on the part of Jesus, and so she follows his lead: rather than assert boldly the presence of the Messiah, a claim that could reasonably have met with resistance or incredulity, she poses a question. Question asking frequently served adaptable teachers to spur on inquisitive students. Perhaps the woman, too, has accommodated to her citizens and encouraged them to find out for themselves who this Jesus character is.¹³³ The end result, notably, is that they too come to affirm: “We ourselves have heard and we know that this is truly the savior of the world (αὐτοὶ... ἀκηκόαμεν καὶ οἶδαμεν ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου)” (4:42). In a briefer way, then, they too have moved from ignorance to an understanding faith by means of an adaptable pedagogy.¹³⁴

Conclusion

As evidenced by the exegesis of these two dialogues, Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman not only come from widely different backgrounds, but their respective interactions with Jesus also differ widely. The well-educated, privileged Pharisee met only with cognitive dissonance and ironic language before stumbling into a discourse on heavenly truth; the quintessential “other,” the woman of Samaria, through her inquisitiveness ascended little by little (κατὰ μικρὸν) to a glimpse of Jesus’ divine identity. Fundamental to this contrast and providing the two scenes with consistency, however, is Jesus’ role as an adaptable guide. Not only do Nicodemus and the woman respond to Jesus differently, but more importantly Jesus responds to each of them in different ways, ways necessary for both of these characters to hear, if not receive, Jesus’ saving

¹³² Zumstein, *Jean* (1–12), 158.

¹³³ Chrysostom: “Notice once more the great wisdom of the woman. She neither revealed His identity clearly, nor did she remain silent. She desired, not to persuade them by her own conviction, but to make them share in her opinion of Him by hearing Him themselves, since this would make her words more convincing” (*Hom. Jo.* 34.1 [PG 59.193]). See also Okure, *The Johannine Approach to Mission*, 170–171.

¹³⁴ The Samaritan people seem to show such progress with respect to the basis for their faith, as well as the content. In v. 39, “many believed in him because of the word of the woman,” and they presumably accept that his is the Christ. Yet, upon hearing Jesus for themselves, “many more believed because of *his* word” (v. 41), and confess him as the “savior of the world.” Cf. Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 13.348.

words. As an adept pedagogue, the Johannine Jesus has employed variation to instruct both characters in the way that each required.

In his adaptability, Jesus made use of progression in each instance, though in radically different ways. He first had to lead the self-confident Nicodemus to ἀπορία before disclosing “heavenly things” to him. With the woman, on the other hand, Jesus demonstrated a much more careful, incremental development from earthly to heavenly matters. In the midst of the progression with the woman, Jesus recognized the failure of his initial tactic, and again, in line with practices of adaptable pedagogy, he tried a different approach that met with positive results. In both dialogues, Jesus only reveals what his interlocutors can begin to comprehend, and only when he considers them ready does he speak to them about the more sublime things.

Other facets of Jesus’ psychagogy showed up in these dialogues as well: utilizing symbolic language (3:3, 5–8; 4:10, 13–14), concession (cf. the “us-and-you” dichotomy in 4:20–22), and statements that invite inquisitiveness (throughout). Furthermore, in the exploration above I have shown that, while Jesus does not shy from using harshness (see especially 3:10), such language arises from his genuine concern for advancement in understanding. His adaptability arises from his love for his interlocutors, since he has come “in order that everyone who believes in him might not perish, but have eternal life” (3:16). Both of these dialogues, when viewed with the *topos* of adaptability in mind, reveal that, at least for the Evangelist, Jesus has indeed come to lead both the woman and Nicodemus—and indeed all people—upward to perceive the truth and possess unending life.

With Words and Tears: The Sisters of Bethany in John 11:1–12:8

The pilot is helped to a successful voyage by means which change with the changes of the wind, and does not confine his guidance of the ship to one method. The physician does not use a single form of treatment for all his patients, nor even for an individual if the physical condition does not remain unaltered, but he watches the lowering and the heightening of the strain, its alterations of fullness and emptiness and all the changes of symptoms, and varies his salutary processes, sometimes using one kind and sometimes another.

PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA, *On Joseph* 33

The Raising of Lazarus: A Narrative in Baroque?

As readers of the Fourth Gospel have likely noted from the moment of its publication, John's miracles differ significantly from those in the Synoptics. Unlike their Synoptic counterparts that read more episodically, Johannine miracles typically lead to extended conflict scenes and/or discourses, as in 5:1–17; 6:1–14; 9:1–3. Only two miracles seem to fit the model found in the Synoptics, those in 2:1–11 and 4:46–54, but these two miracle accounts convey complex ideas about Jesus' identity, power, and are joined to one another by the narrative context in Cana (2:11; 4:54).¹

Even amid the uniqueness of Johannine miracle scenes, however, one miracle, the raising of Lazarus, stands out.² The scene does not begin with, or even quickly advance to narrating the miraculous deed. Rather, the audience must wait to see the tension regarding Lazarus's illness, and then death, resolved.³

1 To be sure, the Synoptic miracle accounts do at times convey significant christological concepts with sophistication, but the point here is that Johannine miracle accounts characteristically convey such concepts in complex, symbol-laden ways.

2 Noted also by C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), 363.

3 R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 141; Andrew T. Lincoln, "The Lazarus Story: A Literary Perspective," in *The*

In between, the narrator recounts Jesus' interactions with his disciples, with Martha and Mary, and with the Jews who have come to mourn with Lazarus's sisters. Indeed, the narrative seems to draw out the tension unnecessarily, in contrast to 4:46–54 in which readers encounter an example of a heightened, but not over-extended sense of anticipation before Jesus assents to performing a healing. In this light, 11:1–44 appears baroque, unduly ornamented, and without a clear narrative or rhetorical reason for its present form. Should the account of the raising of Lazarus, then, be considered a less artful, more convoluted narrative?

I think not, agreeing with Mark Stibbe's assessment, as he writes: "In many ways, John's story of the raising of Lazarus represents the pinnacle of the New Testament literature."⁴ Indeed, far from padding the story with mere ornamentation, the Evangelist artfully accomplishes something significant in between the introduction of the problem and its denouement. The interactions, especially with Jesus and the sisters of Bethany, serve not as mere filler in the narrative arc of the miracle. Rather, the two scenes with Jesus and each sister (vv. 17–27, 28–34) refocus the problem onto the women's relative perceptions of Jesus.⁵ At issue in the entire account is not whether Jesus can raise Lazarus from the dead. Rather, the concern of the Johannine Jesus has to do with whether the women (and others) believe in him, and whether they understand his identity rightly. Since, as I will argue below, neither woman does—at least initially—then Jesus has to engage in the same kind of pedagogy described in John 3 and 4. Jesus' pedagogy of the two sisters, moreover, comes not in the same way for both. In light of the previous discussion of Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, this is hardly surprising. Yet in John 11:1–44, Jesus' treatment of these two women shows a wider range of activity in his pedagogy than with this earlier pair: beyond simply adapting what he says, with the two sisters he displays his versatility in guidance, whether speaking (Martha),

Gospel of John and Christian Theology (ed. Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 216.

4 Mark W.G. Stibbe, "A Tomb with a View: John 11:1–44 in Narrative-Critical Perspective," *NTS* 40 (1994): 38.

5 Some have tried to argue that the main idea of this chapter is the reader's perception or the life of the community, but I think such a reading can leapfrog the narrative dynamics with too quick a view to the audience. However, for fine examples of attending to the narrative and to possible communal dynamics in this story, see Sandra M. Schneiders, "Death in the Community of Eternal Life: History, Theology, and Spirituality in John 11," *Int* 41 (1987): 44–56; Wendy E. Sproston North, " 'Lord, If You Had Been Here . . . ' (John 11.21): The Absence of Jesus and Strategies of Consolation in the Fourth Gospel," *JSNT* 36 (2013): 39–52.

empathizing (Mary), or acting (both) to bring them to comprehend better his identity. Whether by words or by tears, he works to lift their gaze to the truth.⁶

This chapter will focus not only on Jesus' varied interaction with the sisters, but will also attend to the sisters' reactions to Jesus. Many interpreters have argued that one of the two sisters earns the Evangelist's approbation. Yet *which* sister, exactly, comprehends Jesus and responds accurately has become a significant bone of contention.⁷ Does Martha with her lofty confession in 11:27 prove herself the better of the two?⁸ Or does the Evangelist see Mary as the more faithful disciple, the one who earns esteem by anointing Jesus' feet (12:3)?⁹ As with other paired characters in the Gospel, I think this divided consensus illustrates the problematic nature of determining which sister is "better," and only reinforces the notion that perhaps both sisters at points are less than ideal, and at others they act in exemplary ways. Indeed, as I will argue, just as Jesus interacts appropriately but differently with each sister, each sister then demonstrates her gratitude, even faith, in her own way.

6 As should be clear in what follows, I am not persuaded that either sister is to be privileged as the singular ideal in this narrative. Indeed, as Hylen argues, the portrayal of these two sisters is complex and not simple, leading to a great deal of ambiguity; Susan Hylen, *Imperfect Believers: Ambiguous Characters in the Gospel of John* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009), 77–78.

7 Though some do, in fact, identify both sisters as providing adequate or faithful responses to Jesus, e.g., Ingrid R. Kitzberger, "Mary of Bethany and Mary of Magdala—Two Female Characters in the Johannine Passion Narrative: A Feminist, Narrative-Critical Reader-Response," *NTS* 41 (1995): 564–86; Susan Miller, "Mary (of Bethany): The Anointer of the Suffering Messiah," in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Literary Approaches to Sixty-Seven Figures in John* (ed. Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann; WUNT 314; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 473–86.

8 E.g., Rudolf K. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: a Commentary* (trans. G.R. Beasley-Murray, R.W.N. Hoare, and J.K. Riches; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 404–406; Mark W. G. Stibbe, *John's Gospel* (NTR; London: Routledge, 1994), 48; Johannes Beutler, *Das Johannesevangelium: Kommentar* (Freiburg: Herder, 2013); 332.

9 E.g., Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (SP 4; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 328–29; D. Moody Smith, *John* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 223, 225; Christopher W. Skinner, *John and Thomas—Gospels in Conflict?: Johannine Characterization and the Thomas Question* (PTMS 115; Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2009), 223, 225. For an overview of positions on these two sisters in both Luke and John, see Ena Giurescu Heller, "Sibling Rivalry: Martha and Mary of Bethany," in *From the Margins 2: Women of the New Testament and Their Afterlives* (ed. Christine E. Joynes and Christopher C. Rowland; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009), 244–61.

A Timely Delay (11:1–16)

The introduction of the ostensible problem—Lazarus’s illness—while looking like other signs in the Gospel, quickly becomes complicated by Jesus’ delayed response to the sisters, and this leads to Lazarus’s death. Yet in accounting for this delay, Jesus points to its reason, that the death will lead to faith, and thus reframes the focus of the crisis. In this first portion of the Lazarus story, 11:1–16, Jesus makes clear that this delay, and eventually the sign itself, will bring about “the glory of God and the glory of the Son” (v. 4). In turn, as the meaning of “the glory of God” becomes manifest, the narrative will turn its focus to the key issues raised in Jesus’ interaction with the two sisters of the dead man.

The beginning of the narrative in 11:1 shares broad similarities with other miracle scenes in the Gospel. The Evangelist introduces a scene, and then interjects a problem—a shortage of wine, a man crippled for thirty-eight years, a lack of food—which receives someone’s attention. Once Jesus learns about the problem (which at times he does firsthand), often some complication follows that inhibits Jesus’ ability to act.¹⁰ These elements—problem, request, and deferral—all appear in the introduction to the Lazarus story: the Evangelist opens by referencing Lazarus’s illness and his relation to his sisters, with a nod to Mary’s anointing of Jesus, a scene not yet recounted, but coming (11:1–2; cf. 12:1–8).¹¹ Then the narrator notes the message sent to Jesus by the man’s sisters (11:3). Then the complication: Jesus remains where he was for two days, without offering any clear reason (vv. 4–6).

In the other miracle scenes, the complication typically passes quickly, and within moments Jesus enacts the miraculous solution to the initial problem. In the Lazarus story, however, this delay makes things far worse. Jesus’ two-day deferral appears to result in Lazarus’s death (which is no mere “complication”). The delay also raises some questions in the audience’s mind regarding the content of the previous chapter (10:1–30), as well as the statements that Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters (11:3, 5). Moreover, in 4:46–54, Jesus healed at a distance; why not do the same for Lazarus?¹² Jesus’ delay thus introduces

10 So, for example, in response to the request by the royal official for the healing of his child (4:47–48), Jesus replies as if a sign (rather than healing) has been requested; with the crowds at the Passover needing food (6:5–11), he chooses to make out of the problem a teaching moment for his disciples; and with the man born blind (9:2–5), he has a discussion with his disciple based on the cause of the man’s blindness.

11 Pace Wendy E. Sproston North, *The Lazarus Story Within the Johannine Tradition* (JSNTSup 212; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 138.

12 Chrysostom’s answer to the question is striking in its simplicity: Jesus did not do so because the sisters implicitly asked him to come; *Hom. Jo.* 62.3.

doubt as to his trustworthiness as Shepherd, and the veracity of the claim that he loves Lazarus or his sisters.¹³

Another passage with parallels to the scene in 11:1–16, however, brings to light the reason for the delay. Jesus' response to the news of Lazarus's illness echoes the story of the man born blind, as he makes reference to the illness being for some higher purpose.¹⁴ In 9:3, Jesus tells his disciples, "He was born blind so that the works of God might be revealed in him." Similarly, having heard the news of Lazarus's illness, Jesus says, "This illness does not lead to death, but is for the glory of God, in order that the Son of God might be glorified through it" (11:4). The parallel references to doing work in the daylight (9:4–5; 11:8) and "the light of the world (φῶς τοῦ κόσμου)" (9:5; 11:9) further reinforce the connection between the two scenes. In this way, the Evangelist indicates that as with the blind man, Lazarus's story will give Jesus an opportunity to fulfill a higher purpose, i.e., "the glory of God"—the precise meaning of which Jesus will soon make clear.¹⁵

In a possible continuation of the day/night metaphor of 11:9–10, Jesus at last provides the reason to his disciples for going to Judea: "Our friend (ὁ φίλος ἡμῶν) Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going to wake him up" (v. 11). The disciples, not surprisingly, misunderstand what has happened (v. 12), as might any first-time auditor or reader. They say that if Lazarus is only sleeping, he will be fine (σωθήσεται).¹⁶ Yet the Evangelist adds the key fact: Lazarus has in fact died, and Jesus had simply been speaking euphemistically (v. 13). "Then Jesus told them frankly (παρρησία), 'Lazarus has died, and for your sake I rejoice that I was not there, so that you might believe (ἵνα πιστεῦσητε)' " (vv. 14–15). The Evangelist includes at this point several significant things: First, he narrates Jesus' misunderstood metaphor, which allows for explanation and extension on his earlier statement. Second, he characterizes Jesus' explanation of his statement as παρρησία, or "frankness," a trait often used in discussions of moral formation,

13 To be sure, as Giblin notes, the Johannine Jesus works not at any mortal's beck and call, nor does he operate within human timetables, as in John 2:1–11; 4:46–54; and 7:2–14; Charles H. Giblin, "Suggestion, Negative Response, and Positive Action in St John's Portrayal of Jesus: (John 2:1–11; 4:46–54; 7:2–14; 11:1–44)," *NTS* 26 (1980): 197–211.

14 See, e.g., Lee, *Symbolic Narratives*, 191.

15 Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John* (trans. Kevyn Smith; 3 vols.; New York: Crossroad, 1982), 2:325. Of course, reference to some "higher purpose" does not entirely smooth over the problem of theodicy implicit in the difficulty regarding Jesus' delay. At any rate, the attention to this higher purpose should be allowed to stand, without resorting (as some might be tempted) to explain the delay via references to Jesus' distance, the time it would take the messengers to travel, etc.

16 Smith notes that the disciples, as with many other characters, say more than they realize here; Smith, *John*, 220.

and a trait employed especially among Epicurean teachers.¹⁷ Such a reference strengthens the notion that Jesus' acts here as a pedagogue, concerned with his disciples' understanding. Third, Jesus explains what he meant (in part) by "the glory of God": "that you might believe" (v. 15).¹⁸ The delay, then, has effectively escalated the nature of the problem from illness to death, so that the solution (and hence Jesus' power) might come more fully to light.

Understood in this light, the introduction of this miracle scene indicates that the Evangelist has not simply indulged in excessive narrative detail. These opening verses (vv. 1–16) establish, among other things, Jesus' love for the trio of Bethany as well as his pedagogical motivations in responding to the crisis of Lazarus's illness, and ultimately his death. However the Johannine Jesus ultimately responds to the situation, it will come about through his concern that people believe—i.e., that they understand more fully his identity—which he frames as at least part of the glory of God (v. 4). Yet, having heard the disciples in v. 8 and v. 12, as well as having encountered other figures like Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, the audience ought not be surprised if those Jesus encounters in Bethany need help in coming to possess such faith and understanding, and that Jesus would respond to each sister in different, appropriate ways in their time of grief.

"Do You Believe This?" (11:17–27)

From the first actions of the sisters of Bethany in v. 20, a reader might already draw some conclusions about the sisters' characters and their characteristics.¹⁹ No doubt, this is often done with Luke 10:38–42 in mind, where Martha appears as a "doer" while Mary seems more contemplative. However, whereas Luke more positively evaluates Mary, many interpreters praise Martha in John 11 for breaking the norms of how one in grief should behave, as well as for her confession in v. 27.²⁰ Yet, whether one accepts such an

17 Philodemus composed an entire work on this point, entitled *On Frank Criticism* (*Περὶ παρηγορίας*), in which he conveys to other Epicurean guides how best to inform and shape his pupils.

18 That these are two sides of the same idea, see J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010), 622.

19 Cf. Kitzberger, "Mary," 574.

20 Cf. Stibbe, *John's Gospel*, 47; Francis J. Moloney, "The Faith of Martha and Mary: A Narrative Approach to John 11:17–40," *Bib* 75 (1994): 474n8; Craig R. Koester, *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community* (2d ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 66.

assessment, 11:20 does indicate to the readers that a difference exists between the two sisters, a difference highlighted by the Evangelist's isolation of each sister as she approaches Jesus. For while Mary remains at home, Martha goes out to meet Jesus—perhaps echoing the active-or-contemplative contrast found in Luke. When one compares the different ways the women greet Jesus, however, another contrast emerges: while Mary acts (v. 32), Martha speaks (v. 21).

Upon seeing Jesus, Martha greets him with words full of conviction: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know (οἶδα) that whatever you ask of God, God will give to you" (vv. 21–22).²¹ The first statement reads like a veiled rebuke. The sisters asked Jesus to come while their brother yet lived, to respond to the implied request that Jesus perform some great deed.²² To be sure, this indicates some degree of confidence in Jesus' abilities, an indication further reinforced by her statement in v. 22 about Jesus' intimacy with God. Her confidence in Jesus' power and relationship with God are strictly accurate from a Johannine perspective, but something is yet lacking. This is not the first time the Evangelist has introduced a character who utters words full of conviction regarding Jesus' power and relationship to God, as Nicodemus himself said first of all, "We know (οἶδαμεν) that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can perform the signs you have performed unless God is with him" (3:2).²³ Using even the same verb for knowing, οἶδα, both Martha and Nicodemus view Jesus as a divinely empowered wonder-worker.²⁴ Even as Jesus had to educate Nicodemus, he must now reform Martha's estimation of him.²⁵

Jesus begins addressing Martha's concerns directly, certainly with more frankness than he did with Nicodemus. He tells her, "Your brother will rise

21 In the manuscript tradition, the witnesses are rather evenly divided as to whether ἀλλὰ is present in the text. But even if the ἀλλὰ is an insertion, the original καὶ seems to have adversative connotations.

22 So Cornelis Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 260.

23 Miguel Rodríguez-Ruiz, "Significado cristológico y soteriológico de Jn 11,25–27," *EstBib* 55 (1997): 201. For more on the similarities between Martha and Nicodemus, see Margaret M. Beirne, *Women and Men in the Fourth Gospel: a Genuine Discipleship of Equals* (JSNTSup 242; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 119; Skinner, *John and Thomas*, 213.

24 Bultmann, *John*, 401; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 140.

25 Lee, *Symbolic Narratives*, 201–202: "Martha's opening words reveal the level of her faith. . . . Here we find, characteristically, both understanding and misunderstanding. . . . Martha's faith is real but still to be developed."

again” (v. 23). Chrysostom, in imagining alternative reactions Jesus could have given, indicates that this response begins the pedagogical process:

That reply answered for the moment the words: ‘Whatever you shall ask,’ for He did not say: ‘I am making a petition that he will rise,’ but what? ‘Your brother shall rise.’ Therefore, if He had said: ‘O woman, are you still casting your gaze down to earth? I do not need help from anyone else, but I do everything myself,’ it would have been very confusing and might have offended the woman. However, by now saying merely: ‘He will rise,’ He made the statement with the moderation which the situation required.²⁶

Despite Chrysostom’s occasionally florid rhetoric, the point is valid: Martha has misperceived Jesus’ identity and power and presumed his power comes from without, as if he were any other wonder-worker. His response, then, engages her in a discussion of the nature of eschatology—a topic very likely on her mind—by which he will ultimately offer a more accurate description of himself than she currently possesses.

Martha picks up the discussion, and offers another statement of faith. She says, “I know (οἶδα) that my brother will be raised at the resurrection on the last day” (v. 24). Again, her use of “knowing” language indicates her confidence, but also her misunderstanding of Jesus’ words.²⁷ As has often been noted, this is boilerplate first-century Jewish eschatology, at least within significant strands of early Jewish thought.²⁸ What Martha does not say, however, is anything related to what she herself has said before, “whatever you ask of God, God will give to you” (v. 21). She seems incapable of conceiving that Jesus might ask that her brother be raised, a view she remains oblivious to even up to the event itself (cf. v. 39).

Jesus presses the discussion forward, however, to reframe Martha’s eschatological hope.²⁹ The ultimate hope for the dead is not the “resurrection on the last day,” but the Resurrection and the Life, Jesus (v. 25a). Chrysostom rightly notes that Jesus’ aim here is not about bringing Lazarus back from the

²⁶ *Hom. Jo.* 62.3 (PG 59.345).

²⁷ Hartwig Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium* (HNT 6; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 523.

²⁸ See, e.g., Michaels, *John*, 631.

²⁹ Lee, *Symbolic Narratives*, 203, puts it well: “Jesus moves beyond the immediate situation of Lazarus and reveals to Martha his universal role as the giver of eternal life. The life that he offers clearly goes beyond mortal limits: it is not just ἡ ζωὴ but ἡ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ζωὴ (v. 25).”

dead, but on educating Martha regarding his identity.³⁰ This once more underscores the focus of this entire miracle story: the death of Lazarus only sets the scene for Jesus to instill greater faith and understanding within others, especially Martha and Mary. Jesus continues further to explain what it means that he is “the Resurrection and the Life,” reorienting the nature of eschatology: “The one who believes (ὁ πιστεύων) in me, even if that person dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes (ὁ πιστεύων) in me will never, ever die (οὐ μὴ ἀποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα)” (vv. 25b–26b). His response echoes his eschatological statements in 5:28, as Jesus there asserts, “the hour is coming *and now is*.” The ultimate hope for all, whether dead or alive, stands in front of Martha.³¹ The power that will raise the dead on the last day is no less than the incarnate Word speaking to her.

Not incidentally, Jesus ends this revelation of his identity with a question to Martha: “Do you believe this (πιστεύεις τοῦτο)?” (v. 26c). He does not, like Martha, use language of knowledge, but rather that of faith. Yet in asking the question, as he has with others, he presses the issue and asks for a decision—once more suggesting the activity of a pedagogue. Martha’s response to this question seems to many interpreters the height of a declaration of Johannine faith within the Gospel, especially prior to the resurrection, as she claims, “Yes, Lord, I have believed (πεπίστευκα) that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one coming into the world” (v. 27).³² Indeed, much of her confession sounds like 20:31, “These things have been written so that you might believe (πιστεύ[σ]ῃτε) that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. . . .” It would seem that Martha has come, then, to believe in Jesus, and serves as a paradigm of Johannine faith.³³

³⁰ Hom. Jo. 62.3.

³¹ So Thyen (*Johannesevangelium*, 520), who argues that the key of the discourse is engendering belief in Jesus, not hope in the raising of her brother.

³² For those who see Martha’s confession rather positively, see Colleen M. Conway, *Men and Women in the Fourth Gospel: Gender and Johannine Characterization* (SBLDS 167; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 142; Beirne, *Women and Men*, 131; Ruben Zimmermann, “The Narrative Hermeneutics of John 11: Learning with Lazarus How to Understand Death, Life, and Resurrection,” in *The Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John* (ed. Craig R. Koester and Reimund Bieringer; WUNT 222; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 94; Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 262.

³³ So Bultmann, *John*, 404; Gail R. O’Day, “Martha: Seeing the Glory of God,” in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Literary Approaches to Sixty-Seven Figures in John* (ed. Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann; WUNT 314; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 503; Jean Zumstein, *L’évangile selon Saint Jean (1–12)* (CNT 1VA; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2014), 375.

But Martha's confession also has parallels with Peter's in 6:69, and this similarity should suggest caution.³⁴ There, Peter says, "We have believed (πεπιστεύκαμεν) that you are the Holy One of God," yet Peter's narrative arc will demonstrate that his faith, vocal though it may be, lacks understanding. So, too, the remainder of Martha's narrative will highlight a failure to understand (11:39).³⁵ Faith she may have, but not understanding.³⁶ As some have noted, her response does not in any way correspond to what Jesus has just revealed.³⁷ She does not say, "I believe you are the Resurrection and the Life," or any such thing. In many ways, by 11:27 Martha is not unlike the disciples of 2:11, who possess faith—even having beheld Jesus' glory—but their comprehension of Jesus' identity and power remains frustratingly underdeveloped. They do not understand that which they confess to believe, at least not until after the resurrection. Martha's admirable and accurate confession, then, must also be viewed in this light, especially in light of her statement to Jesus in 11:39. She still has yet to fully comprehend the glory of Jesus, and to understand his words, "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (v. 25).

For the time being, however, she seems to take some comfort from speaking with Jesus, and returns to her sister. She certainly has made some progress,

34 Lee, *Symbolic Narratives*, 205–206; Hylan, *Imperfect Believers*, 79.

35 Moloney notes that the perfect here echoes the perfect of οἶδα, a verb which, in the mouth of everyone but Jesus, typically indicates a failure to grasp the truth of Jesus' identity; Francis J. Moloney, "Can Everyone Be Wrong? A Reading of John 11.1–12.8," in *The Gospel of John: Text and Context* (BibInt 72; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 224.

36 Lee writes: "There is one conclusion to be drawn from this seemingly conflicting evidence: Martha both understands and fails to understand at the same time. . . . This need not imply that Martha's faith has not developed in the dialogue with Jesus or that her confession is insincere, misguided, or shallow. Her emphatic 'yes' (*naï*) indicates that, to a considerable extent, she has grasped what Jesus is saying, even if not its full implications. Like other characters in the Gospel of John, Martha is still learning." Dorothy A. Lee, *Flesh and Glory: Symbol, Gender, and Theology in the Gospel of John* (New York: Crossroad, 2002), 218–219. See also Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (AB 29–29A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 1.433.

37 E.g., Schnackenburg, *St. John*, 2.232; Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John* (BNTC 4; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005), 325. See also Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 62.3 (PG 59.346): "Yet, see how confused she still was. For after hearing: 'I am the resurrection and the life,' she did not say, in keeping with this: 'Raise him up from the dead.' On the contrary, whatdid she say? 'I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God.' . . . It seems to me that the woman did not grasp the meaning of what was said. However, she did understand that it was something great, though she did not altogether understand it. That was why, when asked one thing, she replied another. Meanwhile, she gained enough profit so that she brought her grief to an end."

even if she has yet to grasp the sublimity of Jesus' revelation.³⁸ After all, she began by indicating her confidence in Jesus as a wonder-worker, and ends by referring to him as "the Christ."³⁹ Jesus led her, moreover, by responding appropriately to her: she first approached Jesus with a theological statement, and by engaging her in a theological discussion he led her to a greater apprehension of truth. Yet words have not quite allowed Jesus to bring Martha to a fuller understanding, and so he will make use of a more powerful tool. First, though, he will offer a very different kind of guidance to Martha's sister.

"See How He Loved Him!" (11:28–37)

When Mary appears in the narrative, several similarities and dissimilarities become evident between her and her sister. Martha goes to her sister, and in some ways mirrors the Samaritan woman (cf. 4:28–30).⁴⁰ Her report is simple: "The teacher is here and is calling you" (11:28b).⁴¹ Whereas Martha went to Jesus on her own initiative, Mary must receive a summons.⁴² (Notably, Jesus does not chastise Mary for having to be called.) In response, Mary, like her sister, goes to meet Jesus, though unlike Martha she is accompanied by "the Jews," i.e., those who are mourning with her (vv. 29–31). The differences between the sisters continue, as when she comes to Jesus, she offers first not words, but devotion.⁴³

As soon as she sees him, she falls at Jesus' feet (ἔπεσεν αὐτοῦ πρὸς τοῦς πόδας; v. 32), an act that carries with it several resonances within the Fourth Gospel.⁴⁴ Readers might remember this as the response of the blind man (cf. 9:38), who worshipped (προσκύνησεν) when Jesus revealed his identity as the Son of Man (9:35).⁴⁵ Later, at Jesus' arrest, when Jesus utters ἐγώ εἰμι, the guards fall to the ground (ἔπεσαν), indicating fear, if not a degree of reverence (18:6). Nearer to

38 Lee, *Flesh and Glory*, 218–19; Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 263.

39 As Brown notes, Jesus does not "reject [Martha's] titles, but he will demonstrate the deeper truth that lies behind them"; *John*, 1.434.

40 Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 262–63.

41 That Martha calls Jesus merely "the teacher," rather than something greater, such as "the Christ, the one coming into the world," as in v. 27, may reveal further her failure to comprehend Jesus' identity fully. Though as Bennema (*Encountering Jesus*, 259) notes, the titles "Lord" and "teacher" (11:21, 28) indicate some kind of disciple-master relationship.

42 Again, this suggests some parallels with the Good Shepherd discourse (10:4–5, 27).

43 Smith, *John*, 224.

44 Lee, *Symbolic Narratives*, 207–208.

45 Michaels, *John*, 636.

the action of chapter 11, one could reasonably see a connection with Mary's future actions in 12:3, where she anoints Jesus' feet—an act that, as I will discuss later, has resonance with Jesus' own act of devotion in the washing of his disciples' feet (13:3–11). Thus, Mary's first narrated action in Jesus' presence is not to begin a discourse with Jesus, but to take a posture indicative of worship. To risk stating the obvious: she is not her sister.

The differences between the sisters continue appearing when Mary speaks. At Jesus' feet, her words to Jesus echo those of her sister, though with a minor, important difference. She says, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died" (11:32). Her first words nearly perfectly parrot those of Martha,⁴⁶ yet Mary's words stop here. Indeed, these will be the only narrated words for Mary of Bethany in the entirety of the Gospel. To be sure, her words indicate something of the same thing as Martha's: there is a suggestion of chastisement, but also of faith in Jesus as a wonder-worker.⁴⁷ Since unlike Martha she makes no statement of confidence in Jesus' continued power, however, some interpreters have seen in this an utter lack of faith.⁴⁸ Ending there, it would seem she cuts herself off from any opportunity to progress in understanding of Jesus' power and identity. Yet this overlooks the differences between the two sisters. Mary would seem to have little interest in theologizing, and she offers Jesus her confession/complaint, and waits.

In response, Jesus does not take up a conversation as with Martha,⁴⁹ but takes a different approach, initiating a kind of emotional exchange between himself and Mary.⁵⁰ The exact nature of his reaction to Mary has bedeviled interpreters, however, stretching back as early as Origen.⁵¹ The terminology and context stand at apparent odds with one another:

46 The only real difference is the position of the possessive pronoun *σου*, which is placed earlier in Mary's statement perhaps for emphasis.

47 Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 140.

48 E.g., Stibbe, "Tomb," 48; Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 268. On the other hand, since Moloney views Martha's confession as wrongheaded, he is more inclined to see Mary as the positive character in this account; Moloney, "The Faith of Martha and Mary," 482–83. This view, however, unnecessarily denigrates Martha's portrayal, and presumes too much in the portrayal of Mary at this point in the story.

49 Conway, *Men and Women*, 146.

50 Noted also by S. Miller, "Mary," 477–80.

51 Cf. Alan England Brooke, *The Commentary of Origen on S. John's Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1896), 2.292, 305. For the *Rezeptionsgeschichte* of this verb in 11:33, 38, see Cullen I.K. Story, "The Mental Attitude of Jesus at Bethany: John 11:33,38," *NTS* 37 (1991): 55–63.

Ἰησοῦς οὖν ὡς εἶδεν αὐτὴν κλαίουσαν καὶ τοὺς συνελθόντας αὐτῇ Ἰουδαίους κλαίοντας, ἐνεβριμήσατο τῷ πνεύματι καὶ ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτὸν (John 11:33)

A literal translation reads, “Then Jesus, when he saw her [Mary] mourning, as well as ‘the Jews’ who came with her mourning, *became indignant in spirit and disturbed himself*.” The verb ἐμβριμάομαι, the term which poses the most difficulty for interpretation, also appears in 11:38, as “Jesus again became indignant in himself,” but nowhere else in the Gospel. The term has two connotations: (1) to snort (like a horse), and (2) to rebuke.⁵² Typically, the second meaning is indicated by a direct object in the dative, and τῷ πνεύματι could possibly stand here as the thing being rebuked (as in, e.g., Mark 1:43),⁵³ though more likely this dative is one of respect or locative, given the phrase “he troubled himself” acts as a synonymous description of Jesus’ emotional state (further reinforced by the ἐν ἑαυτῷ of v. 38).⁵⁴ More broadly, as Lindars notes in his survey of the term in antiquity, “The word suggests strongly aggressive behaviour as an expression of tremendous rage.”⁵⁵ To be sure, the likes of Lindars and Moloney (among others) are right to insist that the nuances of ἐμβριμάομαι be recognized and incorporated into the text, not smoothed over in light of context. Thus, if they are right, it would seem that Jesus here in response to the mourning of Mary and “the Jews” becomes filled with rage—which is certainly an odd reaction (though many scholars have offered varied explanations for this expression of anger).⁵⁶ This again points to the interpretive crux: the tension between the word ἐμβριμάομαι and the narrative context. Why does Jesus become angry at this point? Despite the ingenuity of some interpreters, that Jesus expresses

52 See H.G. Liddell, “ἐμβριμάομαι,” *LSJ*, 540; W. Bauer, “ἐμβριμάομαι,” *BDAG*, 322. The reference in both lexica for the meaning, “to be deeply moved,” is only here, John 11:33, 38.

53 Barnabas Lindars, “Rebuking the Spirit: A New Analysis of the Lazarus Story of John 11,” *NTS* 38 (1992): 101. Lindars’ explanation of this term, however, suggests that while in the sources used by the Evangelist, this was an exorcism story, the story now is a composite that retains some of the exorcism language, but should now be understood as referring to Jesus’ grief. As North notes, however, while imaginative and fascinating, Lindars’ proposal is highly unlikely, and overlooks the narrative unity of the story in its final form; *The Lazarus Story Within the Johannine Tradition* (JSNTSup 212; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 149–150.

54 So Moloney, “Can Everyone Be Wrong?” 229.

55 Barnabas Lindars, “Rebuking the Spirit,” 93; see his overview of the term in antiquity, pp. 92–96.

56 Notably, Moloney, “Can Everyone Be Wrong?” 229.

anger of all things in response to the mourning of others—so much so that he *weeps* (ἐδάκρυσεν; v. 35)!⁵⁷—is almost so awkward as to be implausible.⁵⁸

Instead, with Jesus' pedagogy in view, another solution presents itself. This is certainly neither the first nor the last time Jesus faces misunderstanding, the reality of his death, or sees the destructive powers at work in the world—all reasons offered by scholars in their attempt to make sense of 11:33 and 38.⁵⁹ Yet it is the *only* time in the entirety of the Gospel when Jesus witnesses first-hand people in severe emotional distress, not least of all Mary.⁶⁰ And only here, when Mary expresses her grief at Jesus' feet does the Evangelist indicate this deeply emotional response.⁶¹ Then, after asking about the location of the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus weeps (vv. 34–35). Jesus does not offer a rebuke to Mary as she utters her complaint, nor as she weeps—a telling absence given that the Johannine Jesus shows little hesitancy to use words to correct others when necessary.⁶² Instead, Jesus responds appropriately to Mary.⁶³ She has not

57 That John varies the terms—*κλαίω* (vv. 31, 33) and *δακρύω* (v. 35)—is not good evidence for a distinction in meaning, since the Fourth Evangelist so frequently alternates synonyms with little distinction between the two, e.g., *γίνωσκω/οἶδα*, *βλέπω/ὁράω*, etc.

58 One solution that I have not yet discussed here is that of Lee (*Symbolic Narratives*, 212), North (*Lazarus Story*, 152–154), and Thyen (*Johannesevangelium*, 534–35), who each argue forcefully that Jesus' emotional distress arises because of his awareness of his impending passion, as he approaches a tomb of his own. Yet the question of timing remains key, I think: what about the weeping of Mary and “the Jews” prompts Jesus' weeping? Why at no other point in the Gospel narrative does Jesus display such fierce emotion? It seems to me that something about the emotionality of Mary and those with her prompts Jesus' show of grief, and that something I take as his adaptability toward Mary.

59 E.g., Moloney, “Can Everyone Be Wrong?,” 229–30; Lincoln, “Lazarus Story,” 221.

60 The only other references to anyone weeping (*κλαίειν*) appear in John 20:11, 13, 15, where Jesus gives a very different response to Mary Magdalene—who of course requires something different than an emotional show from Jesus to understand the nature of Easter morning.

61 So Hylen, *Imperfect Believers*, 84. She writes: “In my view it is a better option to read Jesus' tears as an affirmation of the human grief he finds here. . . . Jesus has no more reason to grieve over their [i.e., Mary and ‘the Jews’] lack of faith than he does over his beloved friend's death.” Cf. also Zumstein, *Jean* (1–12), 376–77.

62 As with Nicodemus (3:10–12), possibly with the official (4:48), toward the Pharisees (5:19–47; 8:12–58), and the crowds in Galilee (6:26), to give just a few examples.

63 “... Jesus reacts [to Mary] adequately. In the same way that he answered the confessing Martha with theological words, here his reaction is on the level of feelings and actions.” Zimmermann, “Narrative Hermeneutics,” 94. Cf. also Smith (*John*, 225): the “best explanation would seem to be the obvious one: Jesus shares the sadness of his friends and their neighbors.”

engaged him in a dialogue, so he does not guide her with words; she has made an emotional expression, and Jesus responds in kind.⁶⁴

If this is an act of guidance on Jesus' part, however, what is the effect? To be sure, parsing an emotional, non-verbal exchange offers some challenges. Nevertheless, I noted earlier that Mary's words and actions expressed both devotion and a lack of understanding about Jesus, perhaps even faith. Jesus' response to Martha, whose first words to Jesus suggested a similar situation as Mary's, involved taking her concerns and then offering reasons for Martha to hope that her grief would not last forever. When interacting with Mary, something similar is taking place. Jesus' deeply emotional response first resonates with Mary's own grief. It conveys that he has not stopped loving Lazarus, a fact "the Jews" in observance themselves note (11:36).⁶⁵ Yet his question, "Where have you laid him?" already begins to move grief toward joy—though Mary, no more than Martha, perceived what Jesus was about to do. Jesus first empathizes with tears, but then acts, and in acting, reveals "the glory of God" (cf. 11:4).⁶⁶

"For the Sake of the Crowd" (11:38–44)

As Jesus approaches the tomb (though still troubled; v. 38), the narrative at last approaches its climax. After two interactions with the sisters, the cast comes together at the tomb.⁶⁷ Presumably, all in attendance, the sisters included, think he has come merely to mourn (cf. v. 36). Yet this deed will not only bring the story of Lazarus to a close, but will also set in motion Jesus' own "hour" (vv. 46–53). In this scene, Jesus also employs adaptability to inspire faith in many who are present with him at the tomb. More directly related to Jesus' pedagogy, however, it will result in the transformation of one, if not both of the sisters.

64 Stibbe, "Tomb," 53. This is further reinforced by the observation of "the Jews" in 11:36, "See how he loved him!" The only fault with their comment is they think his love is in the past tense (ἐφίλει), not the present.

65 As Barrett notes, Jesus' weeping elicits this statement from the Jews that is certainly true, but to a much greater extent than they realize; C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (2d ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 334.

66 See Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 63.1; as well as Beirne, *Women and Men*, 158.

67 That the disciples are with Jesus is presumed (cf. v. 16), and Mary has appeared in the scene just prior. Martha's question in v. 39 indicates her presence, and Jesus makes reference to "the crowd" (v. 42), made up of all these, as well as "the Jews".

Once at the tomb,⁶⁸ Jesus initiates the miracle, and his command, “Lift away the stone,” initiates one more verbal interaction between the teacher (cf. v. 28) and Martha, conspicuously described as “the sister of the deceased” (v. 39ab). The description seems rather gratuitous, as the audience does not likely have so short a memory as to have forgotten Martha’s identity, much less her plight. The Evangelist may have included this epithet in a way similar to Nicodemus’ characterization as one who came to Jesus by night (3:2), i.e., one who yet remains aligned with the realm below, the realm characterized by death and darkness.⁶⁹ At any rate, her failure to understand what Jesus intends to do becomes clear when she interjects, responding to Jesus’ command to open the tomb, “Lord, he [alt., “it”] already smells, for it has been four days” (11:39c). Even this statement highlights Martha’s complicated portrayal. She calls Jesus “Lord” (κύριε), as she has in v. 21, noting some degree of respect for Jesus, even confidence. Yet her objection to his command indicates that her faith in Jesus, so firmly asserted in v. 27, still lacks a full understanding of his identity and power.⁷⁰ Indeed, one might recall that Martha’s “confession” in v. 27 contained no mention of “Resurrection” or “Life,” the very notions that Jesus seeks to put into action at the tomb. Now at the tomb, she still does not understand that, with respect to the resurrection of her brother, “the hour is coming, and now is” (5:25).⁷¹

Jesus’ response aims to instill this understanding in her, and mildly rebukes her.⁷² He tells her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed (ἐὰν πιστεύσῃς) you would see the glory of God?” (11:40). As many observant readers have noted,

68 The reference to “the tomb” (τὸ μνημεῖον) already hints at the resurrection that will take place. Every other time the Evangelist uses this term occurs in a context having to do with Lazarus’s tomb, Jesus’ tomb, or the general resurrection of the dead (5:28; 12:17; 19:41; 20:1–11). Moreover, the description of the stone (λίθος) resonates with the scene depicted on Easter morning (20:1), save that on Easter, the stone had already been removed. Other references to the Resurrection scene include the account of the grave clothes (especially the σοῦδαριον; 11:44a; 20:7), yet Lazarus must have his removed (11:44b) while, like the stone on his tomb, Jesus needs no help from others to proceed from the grave, indicating a rather different kind of resurrection.

69 Cf. Lytta Basset, “La crédibilité du ‘moi je suis’ dans l’Évangile de Jean,” *ETR* 77 (2002): 339.

70 Moloney, “Can Everyone Be Wrong?” 231; cf. also Zumstein, *Jean* (1–12), 377. Zumstein’s recognition of Martha’s failure to comprehend Jesus’ actions here stands in some tension with his earlier affirmation (p. 375) of Martha’s confession as exemplary of Johannine faith.

71 Cf. Lee, *Symbolic Narratives*, 213.

72 Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 63.2 (PG 59.351), says Jesus’ response is “all but rebuking her.”

Jesus never says this in so many words,⁷³ though the Evangelist may be conflating v. 4 and v. 26b. Nevertheless, Jesus confronts the one who averred, “I have believed . . .” (πεπίστευκα; v. 27), and reveals her incredulity. In spite of her disbelief, Jesus will reveal to her in deed the truth hinted at in his earlier words, and make plain the glory of God and the Son (cf. v. 4).

What follows this exchange with Martha reveals Jesus’ larger pedagogical aims. “They removed the stone. Then Jesus lifted his eyes up and said, ‘Father, I thank you (εὐχαριστῶ)⁷⁴ that you heard me. I know (ᾔδειν)⁷⁵ that you always hear me, but I speak on account of the crowd gathered around, that they might believe (ἵνα πιστεύσωσιν) that you sent me’ ” (vv. 41–42).⁷⁶ After this “prayer,” Jesus will call Lazarus from the tomb. Strangely, however, this is not a real prayer. As some have put it, Jesus’ statements to the Father here amount to a “pure artifice,”⁷⁷ while others view this as a sign of Jesus’ unity with the will of the Father.⁷⁸ Yet as Wendy Sproston North rightly notes, in the context of John 11, the most reasonable connection with this prayer is Martha’s statement in v. 22, that Jesus will be given whatever he asks by God, yet the degree to which this power will be on display will exceed Martha’s as yet immature faith. Moreover, Jesus states clearly why he prays this: so that those present might believe that Jesus has been sent by God. Indeed, Jesus’ divine commission is one of the key tenets of Johannine faith (see 6:29; 17:3), and one of the most crucial aspects for understanding Jesus’ identity and mission. So, Jesus adapts to his audience, and utters these words in order that when he had performed the deed, those present—not least of all the sisters—might understand and believe.

“Having said this, [Jesus] cried out in a loud voice, ‘Lazarus, come out!’ ” (11:43). In viewing the prayer and the deed side by side, Chrysostom wonders,

73 E.g., Kitzberger, “Mary,” 577, who insightfully notes the reader’s response to Jesus’ question: “‘No, he did not’ . . . at least the narrator never mentioned it.”

74 This is the third and last time this verb, εὐχαριστεῖν, appears in the Gospel. The other times occurs in relation to the feeding of the five thousand (6:11, 23). This underscores the notion that this last σημεῖον of Jesus’ ministry in some way encompasses the rest.

75 To be sure, Jesus’ knowing is very much unlike Martha’s knowing of vv. 22, 24. Whereas other characters in the Fourth Gospel make claims to know, only Jesus possesses knowledge of the truth.

76 On the possibility that this prayer is connected to LXX Ps. 117 (118), see Max Wilcox, “The Prayer of Jesus in John 11:41b–42,” *NTS* 24 (1977): 128–32.

77 Wendy E. Sproston North, “Jesus’ Prayer in John 11,” in *The Old Testament in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J.L. North* (ed. Steve Moyise; JSNTSup 189; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000), 167.

78 Ibid.

“Why did He not say: ‘In the name of My Father, come forth’? Why did He not say: ‘Raise him up, Father’? On the contrary, even though He had assumed the attitude of one praying, why did He omit all this and display His authority by what He did? Because it was a mark of His wisdom to show condescension by His words, but authority by His deeds.”⁷⁹ The deed itself becomes a pedagogical aid for Jesus. While his work with Martha and Mary took different forms individually, with words and with emotions, the deed was required so that “the glory of God” might be revealed, which in part entails their faith. Moreover, as Jesus said earlier to his disciples, this deed would also lead *them* to believe (11:15a). And, as the Evangelist indicates, many of those present at the tomb do in fact believe (11:45).⁸⁰

The resurrection of Lazarus, presumably a joyous occasion, immediately devolves, however, as the consequences will involve Jesus’ own death. Nevertheless, in exploring Jesus’ pedagogy of both Martha and Mary, a question remains: does either (or both) of the sisters in fact come to any degree of an understanding faith? Fortunately, the Evangelist narrates one more scene with these sisters, however brief, which may provide some answers, or at least further clues, to this question.

Celebrating “The Resurrection” by Preparing for Death (12:1–8)

In the final scene of the story centering on the family from Bethany,⁸¹ the imminent sense of suspense is significantly decreased for the characters involved.⁸² Jesus is eating at the house of his beloved friends, now on the other side of their trauma. The Evangelist recounts, “Jesus went to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus raised from the dead” (12:1). The scene looks backward to the resurrection, but also ahead to Jesus’ own death. More importantly for this study, the Evangelist offers some indications of the fruits of Jesus’ guidance of Mary, if not also of her sister. In what follows, the Evangelist seems to rework

79 Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 64.2 (PG 59.357).

80 See Moloney, “The Faith of Martha and Mary,” 491–92.

81 This scene ought not be too quickly divorced from the preceding. For one, the inclusion of 11:2 points toward it, and the scene ends the involvement of the family from Bethany in the broader narrative. In addition, many scholars, such as Moloney (“Can Everyone Be Wrong?” 215) and Lee (*Flesh and Glory*, 199), read 11:1–12:8 as a whole (though Lee extends her reading through 12:11).

82 Although the dramatic tension within the narrative framework of the Fourth Gospel has reached an all-time high, due to the controversy aroused by the resurrection of Lazarus (11:45–57).

and combine traditions that appear also in the Synoptics, namely the scene from Mark 14:3–9//Matthew 26:6–12, as well as two stories that appear in Luke (7:36–39; 10:38–42).⁸³ These pre-Johannine traditions all come together, however, under the Evangelist's hand, to bring to a close the stories of Lazarus's sisters.

The parallel passage in Mark and Matthew narrates an anointing at Bethany, in which a woman is praised for her act of devotion to Jesus. Unlike the story in John, however, the woman remains anonymous, and she anoints Jesus' head. Some of the language that appears in the Johannine account, however, seems to resonate with that in Mark and Matthew, especially the *μύρουνάριου πιστικῆς πολυτίμου/πολυτελοῦς* (Mark 14:3; John 11:3), as well as the scene being set at a dinner in Bethany. Moreover, in Mark and Matthew, the objection about giving the proceeds to the poor arises, coming significantly in Matthew from the disciples (Matt. 26:8–9; cf. Mark 14:4–5). In both Matthew and Mark, the story of Judas' decision to betray Jesus in exchange for money follows the anointing, and it seems not unlikely that the Evangelist has somehow telescoped the Markan and/or Matthean account by replacing "disciples" in Matthew with "one of the disciples" (John 12:4) i.e., Judas, leading the Evangelist to mention both Judas' impending betrayal (v. 4) and thievery (v. 6). All told, however, the scenes in both Mark and Matthew elevate the woman's act of anointing as one that will ever accompany the spread of the gospel (Mark 14:9; Matt. 26:13).

From Lukan tradition, the Evangelist apparently draws other aspects of this scene.⁸⁴ The dinner, as in Luke 10:38–42, occurs at the house of Martha and Mary, the only place in the Gospels outside of the Fourth Gospel that these sisters make an appearance.⁸⁵ The Lukan account includes the former serving (distracted by her "many tasks," *πολλὴν διακονίαν*; 10:40a; cf. John 12:2), while the latter "was seated at the feet of the Lord" (Luke 10:39b), both descriptions that

83 Cf. Kitzberger, "Mary," 572, as well as Kurek-Chomyczy's argument for how the Fourth Gospel uniquely adapts the Synoptic traditions: Dominika A. Kurek-Chomyczy, "The Fragrance of Her Perfume: The Significance of Sense Imagery in John's Account of the Anointing in Bethany," *NovT* 52 (2010): 334–54. Space does not permit a full discussion, but for a helpful overview of 20th century research, the similarities, and differences between John and the Synoptics, see D. Moody Smith, *John Among the Gospels* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2001).

84 Most thoroughly, see Dorothy A. Lee, "Martha and Mary: Levels of Characterization in Luke and John," in *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John* (ed. Christopher W. Skinner; LNTS; London: T&T Clark, 2013), 197–220.

85 And, as has not been infrequently recognized, the only other place in the Gospels where a character makes an appearance is in Luke 16:19–31, where the character also dies.

have strong similarities with those in John 12:1–3. In Luke’s account, of course, Martha’s service becomes a source of distraction, while Mary is praised for her attentiveness to Jesus (vv. 41–42), but such an evaluative comment about the two sisters is lacking in the Fourth Gospel.⁸⁶ The Lukan story that shares much with John 12:1–8 is the account of Jesus’ visit from a sinful woman, again at dinner (7:36–39). As in Matthew and Mark, the narrator tells of an ointment or perfume (μύρον; v. 36, 38). Yet unlike the other two Synoptics, the woman in Luke pours the perfume on Jesus’ feet (rather than head), and wipes it with her hair (ταῖς θριξίν τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτῆς ἐξέμασσαν; v. 38), both elements that reappear in the Johannine account (see 12:3). Again, the adoptions and adaptations made by the Fourth Evangelist suggest a telescoping, a blending of elements from three different scenes (four, if the distinctive elements of Matt. 26:6–12 make it a separate telling than Mark’s) that center on a woman’s sign of affection for Jesus in the context of a dinner.

Despite the resonance with, perhaps even dependence upon, these Synoptic accounts, the Fourth Evangelist still fashions this narrative to his own ends. Even if an audience were aware of such connections to other stories and traditions, the influence of the narrative context shapes heavily how this account in 12:1–8 would be understood. Indeed, from the beginning, the setting of the scene in Bethany and the reference to Lazarus, “whom Jesus raised from the dead” (v. 1; as if the audience could forget), recall all that has taken place in 11:1–44. Quickly, too, the Evangelist introduces the two sisters, whose interactions with Jesus prior to their brother’s resurrection influence how an audience would perceive the sisters. Their two journeys, initiated respectively by words and tears, finally come to something of a conclusion in 12:1–8.

The Evangelist offers only the scarcest clue to Martha’s journey. Although she received the more sustained focus of the two sisters in 11:1–44, she appears only briefly in half of one verse: “They gave a dinner for him there, and Martha served (διηκόνει)” (12:2a). In light of Luke 10:38–42, one might perceive this as a subtly negative portrayal of Martha, especially in light of what will soon be narrated of Mary’s action. Yet, as insisted throughout this study, different people respond differently to Jesus, even as Jesus responds differently to them. Martha’s service, while scantily described, does have some positive connotations within the Fourth Gospel. Firstly, the context of the dinner occurring after Lazarus’s resurrection suggests that this dinner is held to honor Jesus for

86 Chrysostom, in *Hom. Jo.* 65,2, follows the Lukan evaluation of the sisters in reading this passage.

the deed, and to display gratitude.⁸⁷ That Martha plays a principal role in offering this dinner indicates a positive characterization of her service. Secondly, the term used for Martha's service, διακονέω, appears only once in the Fourth Gospel, only a few verses later in 12:26: "Whoever serves (διακονῇ) me, that person must follow (ἀκολουθεῖτω) me,"⁸⁸ and where I am my servant (διάκονος) will be also. If anyone serves (διακονῇ) me, my Father will honor that one."⁸⁹ In this light, Martha's service appears as an act of faithful discipleship, an act that will receive even honor from God.⁹⁰

The act to which the Evangelist gives the most attention in 12:1–8 is, however, not Martha's, but Mary's. She is again at Jesus' feet, but now she is no longer overcome with sorrow. Instead, in an act of gratitude, she takes a costly perfume, and anoints Jesus' feet with it, and wipes his feet with her hair (v. 3a).⁹¹ The narrative portrays this act as clearly positive, since Judas's objection gives Jesus the opportunity to remark on it as such. Indeed, if any contrast between two figures appears in this Johannine account, it is not between the sisters, but between Mary, who gives extravagantly and sacrificially, and Judas, the thief and traitor.⁹²

Mary's act has two-fold significance that indicates its praiseworthiness. First, as Jesus comments, Mary's gift to him has been a preparation for his own burial.⁹³ This is further supported in the Gospel as Mary's generous pound (λίτραν) of perfume corresponds to Nicodemus's (overly?) generous hundred pounds (λίτρας ἑκατόν) of aloes he uses on Jesus' body after Jesus' death (19:39). The gift from Mary is beautiful, and even prophetic. Yet the deed also anticipates Jesus' own act of extravagant self-giving in the washing of his disciples' feet (13:3–11).⁹⁴ Like Jesus will do with his disciples (τοὺς πόδας. . . ἐκμάσσειν),

87 Satoko Yamaguchi, *Mary and Martha: Women in the World of Jesus* (Orbis: Maryknoll, 2002), 121.

88 This term, ἀκολουθεῖν, is persistently used as a way of describing discipleship, as in all the Gospels (see, e.g., John 1:35–51). Thus, service and discipleship go hand in hand as far as 12:26 are concerned, but this verse also evoke imitation and mutual indwelling, themes touched on throughout the Farewell Discourse of chapters 13–17.

89 Hylen, *Imperfect Believers*, 87.

90 Cf. Kitzberger, "Mary," 579; Charles H. Giblin, "Mary's Anointing for Jesus' Burial-Resurrection (John 12:1–8)," *Bib* 73 (1992): 563.

91 Lee, *Flesh and Glory*, 204.

92 Ibid., 206. Pace Moloney, *John*, 349.

93 As is frequently recognized, the exact meaning of Jesus' words here can be difficult to deduce; for a full discussion, see Moloney, "Can Everyone Be Wrong?," 236–37.

94 Lincoln, *John*, 338; S. Miller, "Mary," 483–5, Beutler, *Johannesevangelium*, 378. Mary's act, too, similarly takes place under the shadow of Judas' betrayal; cf. 13:2.

Mary wipes Jesus' feet (ἐξέμαξεν . . . τοὺς πόδας). Similarly, the context of both these acts is a dinner near the Passover (cf. 12:1; 13:1). What Mary performs, then, is a deed rife with symbolic power. To be sure, as she performs the deed Mary herself likely remains in the dark about even the more obvious implication regarding Jesus' impending death, at least until Jesus himself mentions it.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, Mary's self-giving and generous act is the act of a disciple, and aligns with the kind of self-giving love Jesus models for and commands from his disciples (13:34; cf. 13:15). Thus, Mary and her sister both exemplify ideal discipleship, though each in their own way.⁹⁶

Conclusion

Throughout John 11:1–12:8, the narrative has taken several surprising turns. What starts out like a typical Johannine miracle quickly changes, and a very different focus emerges as the narrative unfolds. Contrary to the expectations set up in 11:1–4, Lazarus does not act as the main character (i.e., the focus of the story other than Jesus). The role of main character goes not to him, but to his sisters. Despite some attempts to privilege one sister over the other, the dual focus on Martha and Mary—with the Evangelist focusing on one and then the other, and back again—disrupts any notion that one of the sisters trumps the other as the “main” character of the narrative.⁹⁷

Both sisters begin with a rudimentary faith in Jesus' wonder-working ability, and both, I have argued, arrive finally at performing deeds of fully committed disciples. Jesus led both sisters, however, via different routes to that common goal. Martha's journey unfolded initially via words. Mary's, on the other hand, went the path of emotional expression. Jesus met both women at their respective starting points: dialoguing on theological themes with Martha, pointing her gaze higher so that she might more rightly perceive his power and identity, even eliciting a confession; but empathizing with Mary and sharing in her grief. Like a skilled guide, he perceived what each sister needed if he were going to guide both upward toward understanding. With both sisters, however, Jesus then moved from words and tears to acting. He raised their brother from

95 So Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 271–72.

96 Cf. Culpepper, who positively understands both Martha and Mary, though his positive understanding of Martha hangs on his reading of 11:27 as an expression of “discerning faith”; *Anatomy*, 141–142.

97 Kitzberger, “Mary,” 578.

the dead, and made plain to them (especially via the “prayer” of 11:41b–42) his relationship with the Father.

It is of no small significance that even as Jesus responded to their words and tears in kind, when the sisters responded to this newfound understanding, their gratitude moved them not to do so with their characteristic words and emotions, but they demonstrated their thanks, as well as their faith, in their deeds. Yet the difference between the two sisters was not erased. Each provided her own response, and both exemplified aspects of discipleship: Martha showing the virtue of service toward others, especially Jesus, and Mary offering her gift of extravagant but humble devotion.⁹⁸ In this way, the account of the sisters of Bethany highlights two important aspects of Jesus’ adaptability: not only does Jesus respond to different people differently, as with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, but disciples can also respond to Jesus in different, but nevertheless appropriate ways. Yet this is not the last resurrection scene in which Jesus must guide disciples to faith and encourage a response, as another Mary (Magdalene) and Thomas have their own post-Easter journeys toward understanding.

98 Cf. Lincoln, “Lazarus Story,” 231: “There is no need . . . to play off one sister against the other and to argue that only one of them is characterized here as a model for Christian discipleship. Martha and Mary have complementary roles, the former serving to highlight the necessity of belief in Jesus’ sovereignty over death and the latter to remind believers that death and the sorrow it brings nevertheless remain real.” His assessment of the import of the two sisters differs from my own, but the basic idea that they both represent different, but equally legitimate responses to Jesus remains.

Receiving the Resurrected Jesus: Mary Magdalene and Thomas (John 20)

One must say . . . , then, that there are many grounds capable of producing faith. Sometimes some are not struck by one proof, but by another. Therefore, God has numerous inducements to present to men that they might accept that the God who is over all things has become incarnate.

ORIGEN, *Commentary on John*, 2.202¹

Why does Jesus bid Thomas to touch him (20:27), while he forbids Mary to do so (v. 17)? This question, or at least the implicit parallel of Mary Magdalene and Thomas in John 20, has prompted explanations that follow many of the same patterns as those regarding Nicodemus/the Samaritan woman and Martha/Mary.² That is, as with these other dyads, scholars have tended to emphasize one of the two characters' exemplary status as a disciple, while the other character provides negative relief. Yet, as with Martha and Mary, scholars remain divided over *which* character, Mary Magdalene or Thomas, offers the positive model of faith for readers.³ To be sure, some maintain that

-
- 1 Translation from Origen, *Commentary on the Gospel According to John* (2 vols.; tr. Ronald E. Heine; FC 80, 89; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989).
 - 2 For an in-depth survey of several ancient and recent (especially feminist) interpretations of the character of Mary, often in contrast to Thomas, see Harold W. Attridge, "Don't Be Touching Me': Recent Feminist Scholarship on Mary Magdalene," in *A Feminist Companion to John*, Vol. 2 (ed. Amy-Jill Levine; FCNT; Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2003), 137–59. One should note, however, that Brown rejects the notion that Mary and Thomas should be seen in comparison or contrast; Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (AB 29–29A; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 2.1011.
 - 3 Dorothy A. Lee, "Partnership in Easter Faith: The Role of Mary Magdalene and Thomas in John 20," *JSNT* 58 (1995): 37–49; Robert G. Maccini, *Her Testimony Is True: Women as Witnesses According to John* (JSNTSup 125; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 215; Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (SP 4; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 537; Adele Reinhartz, "To Love the Lord: An Intertextual Reading of John 20," in *The Labour of Reading: Desire, Alienation, and Biblical Interpretation. Essays in Honor of Robert C. Culley* (ed. Fiona C. Black, Roland Boer, and Erin Runions; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 65; Margaret M. Beirne, *Women and Men in the Fourth Gospel: a Genuine Discipleship of Equals* (JSNTSup 242; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2003), 204–205; Kelli S. O'Brien, "Written That You May Believe: John 20 and Narrative Rhetoric," *CBQ* 67 (2005): 285.

neither character is supposed to provide a positive example of an appropriate response to Jesus,⁴ while others contend that the Evangelist portrays *both* characters as praiseworthy.⁵ Nevertheless, even cursory overviews of most treatments of these two characters tend to emphasize the characters themselves, rather than understanding first why Jesus engages with and responds to them both in different ways.

As with these other pairs in the Gospel, a focus on Jesus' adaptability can bring clarity to the confusion. Not only does attention to Jesus' pedagogy undermine the question of "better" on the whole, but also brings to light the possibility and significance of progress in evaluating one character or another, especially in contrast to each other. To be sure, both characters misunderstand or start off from a faulty position, but this does not mean readers cannot reconsider these characters as the narrative progresses. Instead, the adaptable Jesus works with them where they are, and responds differently so that each character can come to profess a full faith in him.

In this chapter, I will show how both of the characters in these resurrection scenes are neither to be understood as equally faulty, nor as implicitly contrasted with one another, but rather as characters, each making progress in their own ways, however different one may be from the other. In the scenes of John 20:1–18 and vv. 24–29, Jesus appears and speaks to Mary and Thomas both in ways that guide them, rather than strictly rebuking or reproofing them. Jesus employs the same methods he uses elsewhere, such as guiding little by little, challenging an individual's perceptions, and asking poignant questions. In the end, Mary Magdalene and Thomas will both appear as characters whose responses and reactions differ from one another, but, thanks to Jesus' adaptability, are equally appropriate expressions of Easter faith.

The Gardener's Work (20:1–2, 11–18)

Lost at the Tomb

The Evangelist introduces Mary Magdalene as if the audience already knows who she is, much like her appearances in the Synoptics.⁶ Prior to the scene on Easter morning, she appeared at the foot of the cross with no comment or detail, only that she stands alongside three other women, including Jesus' mother (19:25). This reveals only a little about her, as the reader knows nothing

4 E.g., O'Brien, "Written," 285.

5 E.g., Lee, "Partnership."

6 Matt. 27:56, 61; 28:1; Mark 15:40, 47; 16:1; Luke 8:2; 24:10.

about her reasons for being at the cross, her connection to Jesus, her mental state at his crucifixion, or other such details that the Evangelist so often simply bypasses. Yet the Evangelist gives her character a good deal more depth of description throughout John 20, a characterization that is crucial for understanding Jesus' pedagogical work with her.

Mary comes to the tomb on the first day of the week, and arrives "early, while it was still dark (πρωτὶ σκοτίας ἔτι οὕσης)" (20:1a). By this point in the narrative, the reference to darkness is hardly incidental.⁷ As with Nicodemus' night visit in 3:1–2, the reference to darkness in 20:1 indicates not merely the time of day, but points also to Mary's unenlightened understanding of Jesus.⁸ This becomes even clearer when, once she sees that the stone upon the tomb had been removed (20:1b), she runs to Peter and the Beloved Disciple and cries, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb and we do not know where they have laid him" (v. 2).⁹ She fails to recognize (as does every other character in the narrative up to now) that Jesus' death is not the end, and as such remains in the darkness.

These verses do indicate, however, some of Mary's positive traits.¹⁰ Her description of Jesus as "the Lord" indicates that, like other disciples, she sees him as someone worthy of respect, and one could even suppose that she views him not unlike Nicodemus or Martha did initially, i.e., as a great man of God.¹¹ She also has the distinct role of being the first person to visit the tomb on Easter morning, and even though the Evangelist does not reveal the reasons for her visit, it suggests fidelity to Jesus, even in his death.¹² The dual characterization of Mary as faithful yet uncomprehending places her among her fellow characters in this scene, Peter and the Beloved Disciple, as disciples who have yet

7 Cf. 1:5; 3:2, 19; 8:12; 12:35, 46; 13:30; 19:39.

8 Jean Zumstein, *L'évangile selon Saint Jean (13–21)* (CNT IVb; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2007), 270.

9 Gk: οὐκ οἶδμεν ποτὶ ἔθηκαν. That the verb appears in the plural is strange, but, as many have suggested, may reflect some earlier tradition of multiple women reporting from the tomb as appears in the Synoptic parallels to this account. At any rate, it is clear from what follows that the Fourth Evangelist trains his attention not on multiple women, but only on Mary Magdalene.

10 So Jaime Clark-Soles, "Mary Magdalene: Beginning at the End," in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Literary Approaches to Sixty-Seven Figures in John* (ed. by Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann; WUNT 314; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 632–34.

11 Cf. 3:2; 11:21–22. See also 6:68; 13:6; 14:5, 8, 22. In each instance, disciples call Jesus "Lord" but demonstrate a less than full comprehension of his identity.

12 Lee, "Partnership," 41.

to grasp the identity of the one they call “the Lord.” Finally, as she will do later in the chapter, Mary will relate important information to the male disciples, though this first report has more to do with Jesus’ absence than presence.¹³

After a brief interlude relating how Peter and the Beloved Disciple both raced to the tomb (vv. 3–10),¹⁴ the narrative returns to Mary, and places her again at the tomb (v. 11a).¹⁵ Like her homonymous counterpart, the sister of Lazarus, Mary Magdalene stands outside the tomb weeping (κλαίουσα; see 11:31, 33). Like the other Mary, too, however, the weeping is about to give way to wonder and response as she witnesses Jesus’ power—though in even more dramatic form than Mary of Bethany.

It begins as she peers into the tomb (still weeping; 20:11b): she sees two angels, clothed in white, seated where Jesus’ body had previously been laid (v. 12).¹⁶ The angels’ presence has often left many interpreters somewhat perplexed, because unlike the angel(s) in the Synoptics, the two in the Fourth Gospel make no Easter proclamation.¹⁷ They merely ask Mary, “Woman, why are you weeping?” (v. 13a). After these words, the angels disappear as suddenly as they appeared, at least as far as the narrative is concerned. Perhaps, as many have suggested, the angels’ inclusion in the story is a nod to the tradition that appears in Mark, Matthew, and Luke. Nevertheless, if this were merely the Evangelist gesturing toward the traditions around the Easter story circulating in his day, why not go further to include an affirmation? Or, at least, why not have the angels ask a question along the lines of the angels’ question in Luke, “Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, he is risen” (Luke 24:5)? The question in Luke contains an implicit proclamation of resurrection, followed up by an outright profession. Instead, in John the angels (not unlike the Johannine Jesus) pose the question to Mary to give her pause.¹⁸ Here she sees an empty tomb, with two men in white—whether she

13 Colleen M. Conway, *Men and Women in the Fourth Gospel: Gender and Johannine Characterization* (SBLDS 167; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 186.

14 Although passing over these verses here, I will deal with them more fully in the next chapter.

15 The Evangelist never tells the audience how Mary got from being with the other disciples in v. 2 back to the tomb, though the elision of such movements is frustratingly common to the Evangelist.

16 The tomb scene constitutes the only other instance of angels in the Gospel, besides 1:51. There are good reasons to suggest, as several have (e.g., Lincoln, *John*, 492), that the appearance of the angels here indicates the fulfillment of Jesus’ promise to Nathanael in 1:51.

17 Cf. Mark 16:6; Matt 26:5–6; Luke 24:5–7.

18 Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 86.1 (PG 59.468).

recognizes them as angels the Evangelist does not say—indicating that something other than a grave robbery or a removal of a corpse has happened, if she will open her eyes to see it. Thus, the question, like Jesus' question to the first disciples, "What do you seek?" (1:38), could possibly provoke in Mary the birth-
ing of Easter faith.

Mary makes plain that she remains in the dark even now, however, as she responds to the angels rather straightforwardly, nearly repeating her report to the two disciples (v. 2), "They have taken my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him" (v. 13b). She is still aggrieved at the absence of Jesus' body, and here her attachment to Jesus becomes clearer as her response to the angels differs in slight, but significant ways from her report to the two disciples. Instead of "the Lord," she calls Jesus "*my* Lord," and rather than state general lack of knowledge among Jesus' followers, "*we* do not know," here she says, "*I* do not know." The personalized response in v. 13, together with her weeping, heightens the reader's perception of Mary's grief, but also the narrative tension regarding her realization of what has taken place with Jesus' body, a tension that will only grow greater as she turns from the tomb to the gardener.¹⁹

The Evangelist reveals that this is no mere gardener, but, in fact, the resurrected Jesus, though "she did not know that it was Jesus" (v. 14).²⁰ When the resurrected Jesus utters his first words, they share the same form as his first words in the narrative, in that he poses a question (cf. 1:38). Here, he repeats the question of the angels, "Woman, why are you weeping?" but continues, "Whom do you seek (τίνα ζητεῖς)?" (20:15a). The parallel with 1:38 is no vague similarity, but is an altered form of the very question he put to the first disciples, "What do you seek (τί ζητεῖτε)?"²¹ There, as in chapter 20, Jesus seeks to provoke a response in his interlocutors, asking them what is essentially a probing question that encourages reflection. When the first disciples hear the question, they ultimately follow Jesus to where he is staying (1:39), and the next narrated event has one of the two, Andrew, proclaiming the

19 Zumstein (*Jean* (13–21), 277) notes that vv. 11–13 and 14–17 are parallel to one another, making the differences between them all the more striking.

20 That this follows generally recognition scenes in antiquity, especially set in a garden, see Adeline Fehribach, *The Women in the Life of the Bridegroom: A Feminist Historical-Literary Analysis of the Female Characters in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 1998), 157–172.

21 Cf. Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John* (BNTC 4; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005), 493; Zumstein, *Jean* (13–21), 278; Johannes Beutler, *Das Johannesevangelium: Kommentar* (Freiburg: Herder), 522. See also 18:4, 7, 8. On seeking in John, see George L. Parsenios, *Rhetoric and Drama in the Johannine Lawsuit Motif* (WUNT 258; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 49–86.

news of the Messiah to his brother (1:40). With Mary, however, the play falters, even as the angels' question did nothing to give Mary pause for reflection. In response, for the third time, Mary expresses her concern for the body of Jesus (20:15b), unaware that he is the very one speaking to her. So, even as Jesus speaks with her, Mary continues to appear unenlightened, albeit committed, though her attachment to Jesus' body seems to hinder her ability to recognize her Lord.²² Yet also in this brief exchange, Jesus displays his concern to guide Mary gradually to recognize him.²³

The Shepherd Speaks

The moment of the revelation of Jesus' identity comes when Jesus speaks Mary's name (v.16a), even like a shepherd calls his sheep to lead them on (10:3).²⁴ Since, as Chrysostom notes, Mary was unable to progress by sight, Jesus spoke to her to aid her progress.²⁵ Once he speaks her name, however, the moment of recognition dawns upon her. This Mary does, and exclaims, "Rabbouni (which means, 'teacher')!" (20:16b).²⁶ She recognizes him at last, and it seems that the joyful reunion between Mary and the Teacher may now commence.²⁷ Yet Jesus does not share such an expectation; instead, he has to bring Mary to the final stage of her transformation. As his words to her reveal, though she now recognizes in some sense the wondrous reality of Jesus' resurrection, she does not yet grasp what it means for her.

22 Culpepper: "Although she sees how he dies, discovers the tomb empty, sees the angels, and even sees the risen Lord himself, these experiences do not enlighten her. Witnessing each of the key moments of the passion story gives her no advantage or insight. . . . Neither the empty tomb nor the vision of Jesus lifted the veil for Mary Magdalene, only the words of Jesus"; R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 144.

23 Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 86.1 (PG 59.469).

24 Many have noted the way in which this calling of Mary's name recalls the Shepherd Discourse in 10:1–30; e.g., Rudolf K. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: a Commentary* (trans. by G.R. Beasley-Murray, R.W.N. Hoare, and J.K. Riches; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 686; Zumstein, *Jean* (13–21), 278.

25 *Hom. Jo.* 86.1 (PG 59.469).

26 Above I noted how Jesus' question to Mary recalls 1:38, so also her response to him recalls the same scene: her response is the last time Jesus is called "Teacher" in the Gospel, while the first comes from those two disciples in 1:39; cf. Lincoln, *John*, 493.

27 On this scene as resonating with the trope of *anagnorisis*, see Kasper Bro Larsen, *Recognizing the Stranger: Recognition Scenes in the Gospel of John* (BibInt 93; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 203–205.

After her jubilant cry of “Rabbouni!” upon recognizing Jesus (v. 16), the Teacher tells her brusquely, “Don’t be touching me!” (v. 17a).²⁸ To call the meaning of this command merely “contested” would obscure just how unclear this verse is in context.²⁹ But interpreters have seemed of late to settle in on a few specific options: first, reading the passage with Matthew 28:9 as an intertext, some suggest that Mary is bowing at Jesus’ feet in devotion, and Jesus’ words tell her that now is not the time for devotion.³⁰ This view depends too much, I think, on assuming the Evangelist’s knowledge of a specific Synoptic tradition (Matt. 28:9), an assumption that, while not implausible, nevertheless exceeds the evidence in John. Another popular choice, though theologically vexing to some, is to suggest that the Evangelist has a conception of a multi-stage glorification, in which Jesus is by 20:17 at only a liminal stage, and he has yet to ascend.³¹ This option has much to commend it, at least insofar as it presents a kind of theological *lectio difficilior*, and it also makes sense of Jesus’ statement in 20:17, “I *am ascending* [present tense ἀναβαίνω]”, which suggests an event currently in action.³² By the time Jesus visits the disciples (and later, Thomas), however, this process has come to an end, and he may invite Thomas to touch him. Nevertheless, without necessarily dismissing this view, the preceding narrative context, with its triple mention of Mary’s concern for Jesus’ body amid certain evidences of the resurrection, leads to the

28 For a defense of this translation, see Attridge, “‘Don’t Be Touching Me,’” 142.

29 See the review in Attridge, “‘Don’t Be Touching Me.’”

30 E.g., Pheme Perkins, *Resurrection: New Testament Witness and Contemporary Reflection* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1984) 176; Jörg Frey, “‘Ich habe den Herrn gesehen’ (Joh 20,18): Entstehung, Inhalt und Vermittlung des Osterglaubens nach Johannes 20,” in *Studien zu Matthäus und Johannes* (Zürich: tvz, 2009), 277–78.

31 E.g. Brown, *John*, 2.1014–16; Attridge, “‘Don’t Be Touching Me,’” 165–66; Conway, *Men and Women*, 196–197. Yet, as Barrett notes, “A possible conclusion . . . is that John believed that between vv. 17 and 22 the ascension, or at least the complete glorification, of Jesus had taken place. But it must be admitted that he does not say so, and it is very strange that so vital a fact should be left as a matter of inference”; C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (2d ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 470. Cf. also Hartwig Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium* (HNT 6; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 763. Thyen argues that the point is less about Mary and more about the reader, who must accept Jesus’ absence (“let go” of him) in order to experience Jesus’ presence.

32 To be sure, Attridge (“‘Don’t Be Touching Me,’” 165–166) gives a careful defense of this view. His dismissal of the view that the prohibition has anything to do with Mary *per se*, however, presumes that the entire weight of this statement is theological in nature, having nothing (or basically nothing) to do with the narrative dynamics of the passage.

conclusion that these words are specifically for Mary.³³ She wants to touch him, to relate to him again as Teacher. But, as Thomas tacitly affirms in his confession (v. 28), the title “Teacher” only describes the barest part of Jesus’ identity. No longer should his followers consider him as they did prior to the resurrection, and Jesus’ prohibition to Mary brings this into clear focus: she ought not touch Jesus, because this old way of relating to him belongs now to the past.³⁴ In this way, Jesus engages in the guidance of his follower. He lifts her gaze beyond the apparent, and to the sublime. A new stage has come, in which Jesus’ disciples now recognize him as he truly is, and respond appropriately.³⁵

To be sure, at a few rare points in the Gospel, people have in fact come close to recognizing Jesus for who he really is, and when they do, their response is to go and tell others. As early as the testimony of John the Baptist in 1:29, 36, those who see something significant in Jesus declare it to any who will hear. Once Andrew and Philip each learn of Jesus’ significance, they each go to another and spread the news (1:40–41, 45). After the Samaritan woman recognizes Jesus as the Messiah, she runs to her people and beckons them to come (4:25–26, 28–29). When Martha comes to her even partial recognition of Jesus’ identity, she goes at once to her sister and invites her to meet with him (11:27–28). And now, as Mary Magdalene learns that Jesus exceeds the title “Teacher,” he tells her exactly what to do: announce it to others, namely, the disciples (20:17).

Mary obeys the command, and comes to them, “reporting, ‘I have seen the Lord (ἑώρακα τὸν κύριον),’ as well as the things he said to her” (v. 18). The story of Mary Magdalene in 20:1–18, oddly structured as it is with the interruption of vv. 3–10, begins and ends with two parallel accounts. In the first, Mary goes to the tomb, and finding it empty, reports her discovery to the disciples, though without understanding its significance (vv. 1–2). In the second part, however, with the same consternation she visits the tomb again, but the result of this second visit differs dramatically from the first. Rather than ending with weeping and misunderstanding, she leaves the tomb now filled with what many have

33 Reinhartz, “To Love the Lord,” 20.

34 Raymond F. Collins, “Representative Figures,” in *These Things Have Been Written: Studies on the Fourth Gospel* (Louvain: Peeters, 1990), 34–35; Robert B. Crotty, “The Two Magdalene Reports on the Risen Jesus in John 20,” *Pacifica* 12 (1999): 165; Larsen, *Recognizing the Stranger*, 203–204; Frey, “Ich habe den Herrn gesehen,” 278. Notable among those who espouse this position is Moloney (*John*, 526) who recognizes that this chapter includes Mary’s development in faith from unbelieving to mature faith.

35 See Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 86.1 (PG 59.469); see also David C. Fowler, “Meaning of ‘Touch me not’ in John 20:17,” *EQ* 47 (January 1, 1975): 20.

called “Easter faith,”³⁶ and she goes once more to the disciples with some news. No more is she so attached to the whereabouts of Jesus’ body, since Jesus has led her through the prohibition of touching and the news of his ascent. Now she realizes that her Teacher is no longer a corpse, nor is he as he was before, but is the risen and glorified Lord.³⁷ In this way, Mary Magdalene has come to play to pivotal role in moving the disciples from pre-Easter commitment to post-Easter faith.³⁸

Passing Through Locked Doors (20:24–29)

Thomas: Doubting or Misunderstanding?

The reaction of the disciples to Mary’s proclamation the Evangelist leaves unnarrated, though Jesus arrives soon enough, and after speaking peace to them, shows them his hands and side (vv. 19–20a). This evidence that he is in fact resurrected leads them to rejoice (v. 20b), and Jesus promptly commissions them to go into the world (v. 21). Thus, having received the Spirit and the power to forgive and retain (vv. 22–23), it seems their path as disciples has come to a close, and now they are apostles. The Easter story seems to draw to a tidy close.

In this light, Thomas’s absence for the Easter commission comes as something of a surprise to the reader. Readers would likely make the assumption that Thomas, as well as Peter and the Beloved Disciple, and possibly even Mary are numbered among οἱ μαθηταὶ of v. 19. But the narrator reveals, “he was not with then when Jesus came” (v. 24). When the other disciples tell Thomas essentially what Mary reported to them, “We have seen the Lord (ἑωράκαμεν τὸν κύριον)” (v. 25a),³⁹ Thomas offers his (in)famous reply, “Unless I see (ἐὰν μὴ ἴδω) the mark of the nails on his hand, put my finger in the mark of the nails, and put my hand in his side, I will never believe it (οὐ μὴ πιστεύσω)” (v. 25b). Thomas’s meaning here is plain: apart from touching Jesus himself, he cannot accept the disciples’ message of the resurrection. In response, Jesus will appear

36 Ignace de La Potterie, “Genèse de la foi pascale d’après Jn 20,” *NTS* 30 (1984): passim; Collins, “Representative Figures,” 35; Dorothy A. Lee, “Turning from Death to Life: A Biblical Reflection on Mary Magdalene (John 20:1–18),” *Ecumenical Rev* 50 (1998): 116.

37 John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (2d ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 484.

38 So Susanne Ruschmann, *Maria von Magdala im Johannesevangelium: Jüngerin-Zeugin-Lebensbotin* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2002), 236, 242, 248.

39 Noted by Beutler, *Johannesevangelium*, 528.

to him, will in fact take up Thomas's challenge, and in so doing will lead him from incredulosity to faithfulness.⁴⁰

Before looking at the exchange between the resurrected Jesus and Thomas, however, it will help to examine Thomas's earlier appearances in the Gospel. The disciple called "the Twin" first emerges in 11:16. There, as Jesus heads toward Judea to raise Lazarus from the dead, the disciples first objected that going to Judea could be dangerous (v. 8). As a group, they even try subtly to dissuade Jesus from going when Jesus tells them he goes to "wake up" Lazarus (v. 11) by saying, "If he is asleep, he will be fine (σωθήσεται)" (v. 12). Jesus remains firm, however, and urges them toward Bethany, where the glory of God would be revealed (cf. vv. 4, 15), which, as I noted in the previous chapter, simultaneously means Lazarus's resurrection, the disciples' faith, as well as initiating Jesus' hour of glory, i.e., his own death. Unaware of all this, however, and recognizing only the danger of going to Judea, Thomas asserts with fidelity if not a touch of pessimism: "Let us also go, that we might die with him" (vv. 16).⁴¹ It remains unclear if by "him" Thomas means Jesus or Lazarus, but his loyalty in following Jesus even to death is made evident.⁴²

The other scene in which Thomas appears prior to the resurrection is that of the Farewell Discourse. At the beginning of chapter 14, Jesus instructs the disciples about the future, both his and theirs, in the Father's presence (14:1–4). Jesus makes reference to "the way," telling them that they know it (v. 4). Thomas responds to this rather frankly: "Lord, we do not know where you are going;

40 Much has been written regarding the portrayal of Thomas here, perhaps even that this scene comes as a rebuke of so-called Thomasine Christians from the Johannine community; so April De Conick, "Blessed Are Those Who Have Not Seen" (Jn 20:29): Johannine Dramatization of an Early Christian Discourse," in *The Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years* (ed. John D. Turner, Anne McGuire; NHMS 44; Leiden: E J Brill, 1997), 381–398. However, the notion that the Fourth Gospel is in any way consciously opposed to Thomasine Christianity has been roundly refuted in Christopher W. Skinner, *John and Thomas—Gospels in Conflict?: Johannine Characterization and the Thomas Question* (PTMS 115; Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2009).

41 See William Bonney, *Caused to Believe: The Doubting Thomas Story at the Climax of John's Christological Narrative* (BibInt 62; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 137–138. Bonney notes that throughout his earlier appearances (both in John 11 and 14), Thomas's worldview remains grounded in an entirely earthly perspective.

42 As Popp notes, nearly every scene in which Thomas appears is marked by polyvalence; Thomas Popp, "Thomas: Question Marks and Exclamation Marks," in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Literary Approaches to Sixty-Seven Figures in John* (ed. by Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann; WUNT 314; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 504–529.

how can we know the way?" (v. 5). The reader might have some sympathy for Thomas, perhaps recalling Jesus' own words earlier in the Gospel that others have no knowledge of where Jesus is going (cf. 8:14), and more frequently that they cannot follow him (8:21; 13:33, 36). Here, Thomas's words indicate a kind of frank honesty, a willing commitment even if he remains in the dark. In other words, Thomas in this brief appearance looks much like he did in his earlier scene: faithful, if misunderstanding.⁴³

In light of these two earlier appearances, then, one can get a slightly better sense of the character who appears so skeptical of his fellow disciples in 20:25. Although he does not believe his fellow disciples, it does not necessarily arise from a thoroughgoing incredulity, but rather his persistent lack of understanding.⁴⁴ No one in the Gospel prior to the resurrection understood Jesus, and even after the resurrection, several saw the signs of the resurrection (Peter, the Beloved Disciple, and Mary) or heard news of it (the disciples), but only one of those, the Beloved Disciple, is said to have believed without seeing Jesus himself.⁴⁵ But even if one could reasonably view Thomas as unbelieving in the absence of evidence for the resurrection, the preceding scenes in John 20 do not suggest that he is *especially* resistant to believing. Each of the other characters in John 20 *saw* something, many of them seeing Jesus himself, prior to expressing Easter faith: the Beloved Disciple saw the burial clothes (vv. 8–9), Mary Magdalene stood in the presence of the resurrected Jesus (vv. 14–18), and the other disciples (*sans* Thomas) witnessed Jesus standing in their midst, showing them his hands and feet (vv. 19–20).⁴⁶ Indeed, his fellow disciples provide the best parallel to Thomas: someone first proclaims Jesus' resurrection ("I have seen the Lord," v. 18; "*we* have seen the Lord," v. 25), and only after Jesus appears offering the signs of his identity and resurrection do they believe

43 Culpepper (*Anatomy*, 124) considers Thomas to be "the clear-eyed realist" even if he does not understand either the exaltation of the hour nor the resurrection. Yet he also claims that Thomas holds too closely to an earthly Jesus in a way akin to Mary Magdalene, which, as I argue below, seems not to be Thomas's problem. His problem is not attachment *per se*, but his worldly perception of the events of Jesus' hour.

44 Bonney (*Caused to Believe*, 159) argues that Thomas's worldly perspective, what Bonney refers to as realism, is highlighted in his references to the wounds, i.e., his reminder that Jesus is in fact dead.

45 The complicated nature of that statement in 20:9 will be discussed in the following chapter, where the Beloved Disciple's faith will be under greater scrutiny.

46 Cornelis Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 290.

(vv. 19–20, 26–27).⁴⁷ If anything, by his statement in v. 25 Thomas only exemplifies the lack of Easter faith of the other characters who appear earlier in this chapter.

An Appeal to Understand and Believe

Jesus appears to him, however, and urges him to believe (vv. 26–27).⁴⁸ In his appeal for faith, Jesus speaks directly to Thomas as if he had stood in the room when Thomas uttered the words in v. 25. He invites his unbelieving disciple to believe, by offering as proof the very things for which Thomas had asked: “Put your finger here, and see my hands, and put your hand also in my side. Be no longer unbelieving, but believing (μὴ γίνου ἄπιστος ἀλλὰ πιστός)” (v. 27).⁴⁹ Many have seen in the last part of Jesus’ answer to Thomas a firm rebuke. Yet this arises more from interpreter’s assumptions that Thomas remains unduly skeptical, as well as dovetailing with interpretations of Jesus’ response to Thomas in v. 29 (below). If, however, Thomas stands simply as a more fully characterized type of the disciples who fail to believe prior to seeing Jesus, then Jesus’ words, “Be no longer unbelieving but believing,” come more as an appeal than a censure.⁵⁰ Jesus responds appropriately to this previously uncomprehending disciple.⁵¹

Yet in Jesus’ call for Thomas to touch his wounds and thus believe, an implicit contrast emerges for many readers between Jesus’ treatment of Thomas here and Mary earlier in v. 17, “Don’t be touching me.” The invitation for Thomas to

47 Bultmann, *John* 696; Frey, “‘Ich habe den Herrn gesehen,’” 280. See D. Moody Smith, *John* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 384: “there is no believing without seeing, that is, without somebody’s having been seen. . . . The blessing of [20:29] is predicated upon the fact that Jesus’ own disciples, including Mary Magdalene, have seen the risen Jesus and believed in him (20:18, 20, 25, 28–29). In every case their seeing results in belief, although no one says, ‘I saw and therefore I believe.’”

48 Cf. Zumstein, *Jean* (13–21), 291; Zumstein notes that in this scene Jesus takes all the initiative in evoking the response of faith from Thomas.

49 So Lincoln, *John*, 503: “Jesus’ words of invitation take up and accommodate the words Thomas had used in v. 25 in setting his conditions for believing. In this way, he is in fact granted what is necessary for him to move from unbelief to belief.”

50 See the extensive discussion on the meaning of ἄπιστος in Stan Harstine, “Un-doubting Thomas: recognition scenes in the ancient world,” *PRSt* 33 (2006): 435–447.

51 See Skinner, *John and Thomas*, 70: “Thomas’s earlier displayed an unwillingness to entertain the notion of Jesus’s resurrection apart from seeing, touching, and experiencing him. Jesus now overcomes Thomas’s objections by offering him the opportunity to see, touch, and experience for himself. Now that the obstacles have been removed, πίστις is a possibility for Thomas.”

touch while denying Mary's own contact has led some to see a gradation of intimacy with Jesus in Johannine thought, where one of the Twelve can touch, but Mary, a female disciple, cannot.⁵² Other possibilities include a recalling once more of the multi-stage glorification, so that Jesus was not yet completely glorified and so Mary's touch would have been problematic, whereas the glorification had been completed by the time Jesus appeared to Thomas, and so the contact was allowed.⁵³ Yet still another option exists: the difference is neither in Jesus' resurrected state (necessarily) nor in levels of discipleship, but instead arises due to the varying needs of the two disciples, Mary and Thomas. Moule writes,

It is surely much simpler to explain the words to Mary to mean that she need not cling to the Rabbi, for he really is 'with' her and not yet withdrawn from sight. By contrast, then, what Thomas needs is to be met upon his own ground and, since he has resolved to demand tactual evidence, to be offered it—if only to convince him, in the very act, that it may be dispensed with. On this showing, the contrast lies entirely in the needs and circumstances of the two disciples, and not in any difference in the state of the Lord as between the two encounters.⁵⁴

Mary, as I noted, repeatedly shows herself too attached to Jesus' body and, thus, her prior relationship to Jesus. His command not to touch (or to stop touching) thus brings her attention to the new nature of her relationship with her master. Thomas, however, shows no previous signs of such attachment to Jesus' body. Instead, he reveals that, like the rest of the disciples, he could not believe without seeing and touching the resurrected Jesus. The adaptable (and resurrected) Teacher thus acquiesces to the request, since this would be the means by which Thomas would come to share the same Easter faith as Mary.⁵⁵

Jesus' accommodation to Thomas's need leads to the moment of recognition, in which Thomas answers the teacher's invitation, "My Lord and my

52 For variations on this view and their representatives, see Attridge, "Don't Be Touching Me," 157–162. Especially of note is the role of the *Gospel of Mary* in portraying Mary as an equal to the male disciples, which leads some to posit that the Fourth Gospel (among other texts) presents an opposing vision of a hierarchy of discipleship favoring males.

53 Again, see Attridge, "Don't Be Touching Me," 163–166.

54 C.F.D. Moule, "The Individualism of the Fourth Gospel," *NovT* 5 (1962): 175. Reprinted in David E. Orton, ed., *The Composition of John's Gospel: Selected Studies from Novum Testamentum* (Leiden: Brill, 1999) 21–40.

55 Zumstein, *Jean* (13–21), 292–93.

God!" (20:28). As frequently noted, in Thomas's response the Evangelist depicts the highest christological affirmation from any character in the Gospel.⁵⁶ Moreover, unlike, say, the statements of Peter (6:69) or Martha (11:27), readers have reason to presume that Thomas's statement serves as the first affirmation of Jesus' identity that carries with it some measure of understanding, and this also indicates the completion of his journey.⁵⁷ He expresses Easter faith fully, expressing what the audience has known from the beginning, that in Jesus the divine Logos, who is both with God and is God (1:1–2), is made manifest.⁵⁸ Seeing the signs of the resurrection, Thomas thus gives voice to this truth in the narrative world.

But it would seem, at least to many commentators, that Thomas's moment of clarity and sublimity melts in the light of Jesus' words, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who, though not seeing, also believe" (20:29).⁵⁹ Though Thomas's confession does get at the truth of Jesus' identity, his faith came about only because he has seen Jesus. In what amounts to a rebuke, Jesus denies the blessing to Thomas that he promises to others who believe without seeing. Jesus' statement in v. 29 seems to underscore further the persistent theme in the Gospel that seeing (especially seeing signs) and faith are incommensurate.⁶⁰ In this way, some might consider Thomas's faith to appear either inauthentic or second-rate.

Yet more recently, scholars have begun to appreciate the complex dynamic between faith and sight in the Gospel.⁶¹ Indeed, earlier I noted that even in

56 Bultmann, *John*, 695; Brown, *John*, 2.1032; Lee, "Partnership," 46; Gilbert van Belle, "Christology and Soteriology in the Fourth Gospel: The Conclusion to the Gospel of John Revisited," in *Theology and Christology in the Fourth Gospel: Essays by the Members of the SNTS Johannine Writings Seminar* (ed. by Gilbert van Belle, J.G. Van der Watt, and P.J. Maritz; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005), 454; Popp, "Thomas," 527.

57 Moloney, *John*, 537.

58 His analysis of Thomas's faith aside, Beutler notes that at least from a literary standpoint, this confession creates a sort of *inclusio* with the prologue (*Johannesevangelium*, 530). Thyen (*Johannesevangelium*, 769) notes this as well, but adds that Thomas's confession provides a sort of counter-testimony to the crowd's statement in 19:15: "We have no king but Caesar!"

59 Craig R. Koester, "Hearing, Seeing, and Believing in the Gospel of John," *Bib* 70 (1989): 345–47; De Conick, "Blessed," 394–95; Skinner, *John and Thomas*, 71; Raymond F. Collins, "Who Are You? Comparison/Contrast in Fourth Gospel Characterization," in *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John* (ed. Christopher W. Skinner; LNTS; London: T&T Clark, 2013), 88–89.

60 Though again see Parsenios, *Rhetoric and Drama*, 123–128, as providing a corrective to the view that signs and faith are opposed, rather than somehow connected.

61 See, for example, Parsenios, *Rhetoric and Drama*, 124, 127.

John 20 everyone who comes to faith does so by means of perception, especially through seeing.⁶² In addition to this, some clear-eyed interpreters have rightly recognized that, while indeed Thomas would be denied the blessing Jesus indicates here, that does not imply that Thomas possesses no blessings whatsoever, much less that his faith is inadequate. Looking ahead to vv. 30–31, where the Evangelist speaks directly to his audience, one might rightly realize that the macarism of v. 29 is intended not for Thomas, but for the Gospel audience, consisting of those who very likely never saw the incarnate Jesus.⁶³ The blessing of v. 29 is theirs to embrace, because they, unlike Thomas, would not have the opportunity to touch the marks of the nails or the spear. Yet the Evangelist seems to hope that his audience will nevertheless declare along with Thomas that Jesus is both Lord and God, and in so doing, receive their blessing.

Thus, neither Thomas's faith nor his declaration "My Lord and my God" (v. 28) need to come under a cloud of suspicion. Quite the opposite: he expresses true resurrection faith, and the audience needs to believe his witness, and in doing so, share in that faith.⁶⁴ To be sure, this does not make Thomas out as some hero, as he himself has come to this understanding and confession only by means of Jesus' guidance. If Thomas had only the witness of his fellow disciples to guide him, a reader might rightly presume that Thomas would always lack Easter faith. Yet this is not what has happened: Jesus has met Thomas at his point of need, and guided him to the realization of sublime truth. Now the audience must, without the same signs provided to Thomas, depend upon the witness of those like Thomas to be their "proof" of faith.

62 Even the readers of the Gospel themselves "see" Jesus via the pages of the Gospel, or (more likely) through the hearing of the Gospel's narrative. That is, they too must rely upon perception in order to believe, in order to have "sight." This deeper level of "seeing" is prevalent in early Jewish literature, including Philo: see, e.g., Steven Fraade, "Hearing and Seeing at Sinai: Interpretive Trajectories," in George J. Brooke, Hindy Najman, Loren T. Stuckenbruck, eds., *The Significance of Sinai: Traditions about Sinai and Divine Revelation in Judaism and Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 247–68; Ellen Birnbaum, "What Does Philo Mean by 'Seeing God'? Some Methodological Considerations," *SBL Seminar Papers* 34 (1995): 535–552, and eadem, *The Place of Judaism in Philo's Thought: Israel, Jews, and Proselytes* (BJS 290, SPhiloM 2; Atlanta: Scholars, 1996).

63 Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 770; Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 292–93. Cf. also de La Potterie, "Genèse de la foi pascale d'après Jn 20," 42.

64 So Collins, "Representative Figures," 37–38.

Conclusion: Witnessing and Interpreting the Resurrection

Thomas plays a key role in the Gospel as the fullest confessor of Easter faith. His role, unique as it is, does not mean that he overshadows the other disciples. Specifically, his declaration does not undercut the importance of Mary Magdalene, especially in her position as *apostola apostolorum*.⁶⁵ Both Thomas and Mary play key contributing roles within the narrative: Mary is the first witness of the resurrection, Thomas the first interpreter of the resurrection's meaning.⁶⁶ Significant as these two characters are, the foregoing analysis of the scenes in John 20 has illustrated the ways in which both make progress and take up their exalted status only by means of Jesus' shepherding of their understanding, in ways appropriate to each. Indeed, the variation on the one point of touching—denied to Mary, but offered to Thomas—underscores this adaptable guidance. The issue of touching brings to the fore the different needs of each disciple: Mary to let go of the pre-Easter Jesus, and Thomas to take hold of the evidence of the empty tomb. And though these two must take different routes, Jesus leads both ultimately to expressions of their shared Easter faith.

Mary Magdalene and Thomas are not the only named characters to encounter the resurrected Jesus at the Gospel's close. Two others, also disciples, come to possess the same Easter faith as Mary and Thomas. Peter and the Beloved Disciple, different as they are, eventually come to the same goal as these others. Yet they also stand apart: both Peter and the Beloved Disciple experience Jesus' focused pedagogy over an extended period of time, and, moreover, each comes not only to faith, but also to play a specific role for the community Jesus leaves behind. Thus, these two disciples offer the greatest examples of Jesus' adaptable pedagogy, and will be the focus of the next chapter.

65 This possible competition, as Attridge notes ('Don't Be Touching Me', 164), has been one of the driving forces of much of feminist exegesis. Yet in the argument above, I offered an argument that neither elevates Thomas over Mary nor ignores Mary's shortcomings as she progresses, and in this way still consider my argument sympathetic to feminist concerns.

66 Lee, "Partnership," 46–48.

The Shepherd and the Witness: Jesus with Peter and the Beloved Disciple

Teachers will differ for each student, one much, one little, just as a young man differs from a woman and old men will differ from women and youngsters alike. . . . To any who display errors, he will speak with frankness, while to some he will speak on an individual basis by way of jest, though the actions in need of correction are the same.

PHILODEMUS, *On Frank Criticism*, Col. vi ab¹

The examples of Jesus' interactions with Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, the sisters of Bethany, Mary Magdalene, and Thomas all reveal that Jesus does adapt to different people differently to bring each to a single goal of understanding and faith, which brings about eternal life. In this chapter, the focus will fall primarily upon the ways in which Jesus brings about changes among two of his disciples, Simon Peter and the Beloved Disciple, who very frequently appear alongside one another.² This is to be seen as an expansion of Jesus' efforts to bring people to understanding and faith, as his instruction of these two disciples will result in the ongoing pedagogy of Jesus' followers after his departure. That is, the Johannine Jesus adapts to both disciples to equip them for different, though essential roles, one as shepherd, the other as witness.

The roles for these two disciples correspond to each man's particular strengths: Peter, who emerges early on as a leader among Jesus' followers, will also serve as a leader in Jesus' stead; the Beloved Disciple, who is both close to Jesus and observant, will provide insightful witness to others about Jesus' life and significance. Yet each disciple must undergo a transformation of sorts in order to fulfill the role Jesus sets out for him. Peter, a man of self-determination, will transform into a man of submission to God's will, while the Beloved disciple will move from passive observation to active testimony. Jesus will moreover provide the fundamental force that enables such alterations in both men. In so doing, the Johannine Jesus will utilize different methods, as his guidance of

1 Modified translation from Philodemus, *On Frank Criticism* (trans. by David Konstan et al.; SBLTT 43; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1998), 100–101.

2 See Hartwig Thyen, *Das Johannesevangelium* (HNT 6; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 598–600.

Peter is with a heavy hand, while his formation of the Beloved Disciple works much more subtly. Furthermore, Jesus makes use of many of the same methods that characterized the adaptable guide in Chapter 1, such as variation, repetition, harsh/gentle speech, examples, and providing opportunities for both failure and success. That is, Jesus' pedagogy employs an adaptable disposition, and in so doing provides for the future needs of his followers for their ongoing life and faith. In what follows, I will analyze the ways in which Jesus does just that by exploring the interactions, both overt and implied, between Jesus and these two disciples in the Gospel narrative.

Peter and the Beloved Disciple: Competing or Complementary?

Before exploring Jesus' guidance of these two characters, one must first deal with the question of their juxtaposition in the Gospel.³ Are these two men depicted in such a way that one of them is to be seen as possessing a better form of discipleship or a fuller understanding of Jesus? Or should readers understand them as distinct but nevertheless appropriate ways of responding to Jesus? The question has exercised Johannine scholarship for some time, with many claiming that the Beloved Disciple ought to be regarded as superior to Peter, and that his discipleship is the paradigm for all other disciples.⁴ More recently, however, a growing concert of voices has argued the opposite,

3 A recent study has offered a different counterpart for the Beloved Disciple, John the Baptist; Dorothy A. Lee, "Witness in the Fourth Gospel: John the Baptist and the Beloved Disciple as Counterparts," *ABR* 61 (2013): 1–17. The pairing of these two, as Lee presents it, is not within the narrative world, however, but in the framing of the Gospel, creating a "literary *inclusio*" (1–2), and contributing to the Gospel's legal and forensic elements.

4 Examples include: Raymond E. Brown, Karl P. Donfried, and John Henry Paul Reumann, eds., *Peter in the New Testament; a Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1973), 135–139; Raymond F. Collins, "Representative Figures of the Fourth Gospel," *DRev* 94 (1976): 127–128, 130–132; John J. Gunther, "The Relation of the Beloved Disciple to the Twelve," *TZ* 37 (1981): 129–148; R. Alan Culpepper, *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 122; PHEME PERKINS, *Peter: Apostle for the Whole Church* (SPNT; Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 96–97, 100–101. Some went so far as to suggest that the Gospel had within it an anti-Petrine bias, based upon a historical reconstruction of the Johannine community, e.g., Arthur H. Maynard, "The Role of Peter in the Fourth Gospel," *NTS* 30 (1984): 531–548; Martin Hengel, *The Johannine question* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989), 78, 125; Arthur J. Droge, "The Status of Peter in the Fourth Gospel: a Note on John 18:10–11," *JBL* 109 (1990): 307–311; Christopher W. Skinner, *John and Thomas—Gospels in Conflict?: Johannine Characterization and the Thomas Question* (PTMS 115; Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2009), 78–138.

claiming that these two disciples stand on equal ground, only providing two variations on how one might faithfully follow Jesus.⁵ In particular, Richard Bauckham has persuasively argued that rather than presenting *competing* forms of discipleship, Peter and the Beloved Disciple epitomize two different, *complementary* ways of following the John's Jesus.⁶

The argument has several points: First, the Beloved Disciple's role in the Gospel does not accord well with a notion of paradigmatic discipleship, since his role in the Gospel is primarily one as witness to events of Jesus' life inaccessible to anyone else.⁷ Second, a major way in which he appears as a disciple of Jesus is his receiving of Jesus' mother into his home (19:26–27), something unique only to that disciple.⁸ Moreover, his final appearance in the Gospel is as one who is following Jesus (21:20), to be sure, but this is not unique: also following Jesus at this point is none other than Peter (21:19, 22).⁹ Bauckham instead argues that, if anything, the Beloved Disciple is portrayed as the ideal *witness* whose testimony informs the Gospel, rather than the ideal *disciple*.¹⁰

In light of such statements about the Beloved Disciple's characterization in the Gospel, the portrayal of Peter's discipleship has garnered reconsideration.¹¹

-
- 5 Richard Bauckham, "The Beloved Disciple as Ideal Author," *JSNT* 49 (1993): 21–44; repr. pages 73–92 in *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 2007). Following in Bauckham's wake are Kelli S. O'Brien, "Written That You May Believe: John 20 and Narrative Rhetoric," *CBQ* 67 (2005): 284–302; Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 600; D. Francis Tolmie, "The (Not So) Good Shepherd: The Use of Shepherd Imagery in the Characterisation of Peter in the Fourth Gospel," in *Imagery in the Gospel of John: Terms, Forms, Themes, and Theology of Johannine Figurative Language* (eds. Jörg Frey, J.G. Van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann; WUNT 200; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 353–367; Bradford Blaine, *Peter in the Gospel of John: The Making of an Authentic Disciple* (SBL AcBib 27; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007); Cornelis Bennema, *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014), 307–309; R. Alan Culpepper, "Peter as Exemplary Disciple in John 21:15–19," *PRSt* 37 (2010): 165–178.
 - 6 Bauckham, "Beloved Disciple," 34–35. Cf. also Kevin Quast, *Peter and the Beloved Disciple* (JSNTSup 32; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989); Patrick J. Hartin, "The Role of Peter in the Fourth Gospel," *Neot* 24 (1990): 49–61; both of these were published before Bauckham, though Bauckham's formulation of the relationship between Peter and the Beloved Disciple has proven by far more influential.
 - 7 Bauckham, "Beloved Disciple," 33.
 - 8 *Ibid.*, 33–34.
 - 9 *Ibid.*, 34.
 - 10 *Ibid.*, 36–39.
 - 11 Cf. Colleen M. Conway, *Men and Women in the Fourth Gospel: Gender and Johannine Characterization* (SBLDS 167; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 164–175; Nicolas Farelly, *The Disciples in the Fourth Gospel: A Narrative Analysis of Their Faith*

If the Beloved Disciple's form of following Jesus is merely *commendable* (rather than ideal), perhaps Peter's response to Jesus is no less fitting. By the close of the Gospel narrative, Peter appears ready to take upon himself the kind of leadership described by Jesus in John 10:1–18, a leader who protects “the flock” by laying down his life.¹² If, prior to the close of the Gospel narrative, Peter is in fact characterized as less faithful than the Beloved Disciple—a claim I will challenge later in this chapter—Peter nevertheless appears at the narrative's close as no less a faithful follower than anyone else (21:15–19).

By the end of the Gospel, rather, the Evangelist offers not one, but two forms of acceptable discipleship: one of self-sacrificial leadership in Peter, and the other of reliable witness to Jesus' significance. The community that worshipped Jesus would require both forms of discipleship (and others) in Jesus' absence. One provided the kind of guidance and protection typified in the Good Shepherd discourse (10:1–18), while the other offered faithful representations of Jesus' words and deeds. Without one or the other, the community of believers would be impoverished. Within the Gospel narrative, however, neither disciple fully realizes his mode of discipleship, and so readers must distinguish between the narrative present (time at the narrative level) and the discourse present (the time at the narrative's telling).¹³ Their responses to Jesus will only be realized later on, outside of the narrative (cf. 19:35; 21:18–19).

This last point, that neither fulfills his role as a disciple in the Gospel until the narrative's close (or beyond), brings the conversation back to Jesus' role in the development of these two disciples. While Bauckham and others have rightly noted that Peter and the Beloved Disciple express *complementary* forms of discipleship, they have done so in a way that implies that the development of these two characters within the Gospel takes place naturally, if not inevitably. So, even if Peter stumbles and falters in his discipleship, his ultimate role as one who will shepherd the flock and lay down his life for them (21:15–19) seems predetermined from the Gospel's outset.¹⁴ The Beloved Disciple's role as

and Understanding (WUNT 11 290; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 102–106; Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 111–126.

12 A discussion of John 21 will be taken up later in this chapter.

13 See Seymour B. Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980), 62–63.

14 An example of such a view is Culpepper (*Anatomy*, 121), who notes that after his triple affirmation of his love for Jesus, Peter “has finished his preparation. He has been humbled. The promise of his earlier misdirected and unenlightened zeal can now be realized. He is ready to ‘follow’ Jesus” (note the passive verbs without reference to the active agent). Bauckham (“Beloved Disciple,” 36) is a little more careful, recognizing that in John 21 Peter is a disciple who “through failure and grace is enabled *by Jesus* to become the chief pastor

the “ideal witness” is discussed by scholars as if he fulfills this role as a matter of course, like an egg becomes a chick or an acorn an oak.¹⁵ With the passage of time and the change of perspective that would take place after the resurrection (cf. 2:22; 12:16; 13:7), it seems almost that the disciple Jesus loved and Peter both simply grow into what they were always supposed to be.

What this analysis lacks, however, is a clear discussion of the means by which these two disciples come to exhibit their complementary forms of discipleship, not to mention the reasons why they serve the particular roles they do. Viewing the John’s Jesus as an adaptable guide can fill this lacuna in the scholarly discussion of these two disciples. Rather than presume that Jesus’ interactions with these two are incidental to their ultimate formation, the specific exchanges between Jesus and these two figures play an essential role in their eventual fates as shepherd (Peter) and witness (Beloved Disciple).¹⁶ Thus, while Bauckham rightly claims that the characters of the Beloved Disciple and Peter demonstrate two different, yet authentic ways of responding to Jesus, I will argue that these two disciples become positive images of discipleship in the Fourth Gospel because *Jesus* has responded differently—and appropriately—to *them*.

Peter’s Early Appearances: Passive and Active

Jesus’ initial appearance in the Gospel narrative takes place with the call of the first disciples (1:35–51), among whom Peter numbers. Peter remains completely passive in this first encounter with Jesus. After this scene, Peter recedes into the background with his fellow disciples until emerging again as many disciples begin to desert Jesus (6:60–66), there to declare on behalf of the Twelve their collective allegiance to Jesus. There Peter will show himself as a leader, even a man of action who is utterly devoted to his master. Thus the Evangelist introduces a contrast into Peter’s first two scenes in the narrative: is Peter

-
- of the church” (emphasis mine). Even so, Jesus’ role in Peter’s formation is minimally addressed in Bauckham’s influential study. See also Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 121–123.
- 15 As in, e.g., David R. Beck, *The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the Fourth Gospel* (BibInt 27; Leiden: Brill, 1997); O’Brien, “Written”; Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*; James L. Resseguie, “The Beloved Disciple: The Ideal Point of View,” in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Literary Approaches to Sixty-Seven Figures in John* (ed. Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann; WUNT 314; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 537–50.
- 16 Importantly, Jesus also accommodates to the church’s varying needs in lieu of his departure, i.e., for someone to serve as shepherd and for someone to provide reliable testimony.

more like the submissive, passive character in 1:40–42, or the assertive, confident character of 6:69? Given how Peter acts later on in the Gospel—notably his claims to follow Jesus to death (13:37) and his violent deeds in the garden (18:10)—the latter seems more likely. Yet Peter’s first interaction with Jesus will reveal that it is the passive, submissive Peter who is the better disciple of Jesus, and will prefigure the posture of Peter’s leadership after Jesus’ departure.

The Naming of Simon Peter (1:41–42)

Peter’s first encounter with Jesus entails no initiative on Peter’s part.¹⁷ He hears about Jesus from Andrew (1:41), who then brings Peter (ἤγαγεν) to Jesus (v. 42). The way in which Peter comes to Jesus stands strongly contrasted with Jesus’ encounter with his first two disciples. In the preceding verse these disciples begin following him (v. 37), and Jesus invites them with the provocative question, “What do you seek (τί ζητεῖτε)?” (v. 38), followed up with his command, “Come and see” (v. 39). Jesus thus encourages these disciples to take initiative. He encourages them to inquire, as an adaptable guide might do.

Not so with Peter: Jesus takes up a different approach to lead Peter on the path toward discipleship, one that, for Peter, comes only to completion via submission. As the Evangelist makes clear later on, Peter does not need to be goaded into action, and does not need the prompting Jesus gave to the other two disciples. Rather, Peter is almost *too* inclined to act, and to do as he sees fit. So Jesus’ aims in this first encounter are different. Jesus must establish the kind of discipleship he expects from Peter. What he does, then, is to demonstrate that it is he, not Peter, who has the authority.

Jesus begins by revealing his supernatural knowledge of Peter. “Looking intently at him, Jesus said, ‘You are Simon, the son of John; you will be called Cephas’ (which means ‘Peter’)” (v. 42b).¹⁸ Nowhere does the Evangelist give his readers an indication of Jesus having already met Peter or become acquainted with him. On the contrary, Andrew’s claim to have found the Messiah (v. 41) suggests that neither he nor Peter had any prior awareness of Jesus. Jesus’ acknowledgement of Simon’s name and family indicates that Jesus is here

17 Michael Labahn, “Simon Peter: An Ambiguous Character and His Narrative Career,” in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Literary Approaches to Sixty-Seven Figures in John* (ed. Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann; WUNT 314; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 153.

18 This interpretation follows Rudolf K. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: a Commentary* (trans. G.R. Beasley-Murray, R.W.N. Hoare, and J.K. Riches; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971), 101–102; Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 135–136; Jean Zumstein, *L’évangile selon Saint Jean (1–12)* (CNT IVa; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2014), 87–88.

demonstrating his preternatural abilities (as he does with Nathanael in vv. 47, 49) to effect some positive response from Simon. Jesus further establishes his authority over Simon by renaming him, something characteristically done by God in the Hebrew Scriptures.¹⁹ The Evangelist ends this scene there, withholding the result of Jesus' revelation on Simon, but the presumptive outcome is obvious: on the basis of this meeting, Simon Peter begins to follow Jesus. Importantly, in this scene Peter has remained completely passive (not even the subject of a verb), and so has been instructed in the particular form of discipleship required of him. Indeed, Peter's passive portrayal in 1:41–42 has much more in common with the prophecy of what his future life *will be* (21:18b–19).²⁰ If Peter is at this point in his character development just as impulsive as he will appear later on, then Jesus has accommodated well: leaving no room for his impulsive behavior, Jesus has with a strong hand taught Peter that to follow him is to submit to his will.

Excursus: The "Other Disciple" in 1:35–40

Peter is not the only disciple whom Jesus calls in this scene. As discussed earlier, two others appear in Jesus' train before Peter encounters Jesus. These first two followers, who are ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν of the Baptist, rely first upon the adaptability embodied in the Baptist's testimony.²¹ John cries out, "Behold, the lamb of God!" (1:36), and upon hearing this the two disciples with him immediately follow Jesus (v. 37).²² The Baptist's disciples now begin to follow Jesus,

19 As in, e.g., Genesis 17:4–5; 32:28–29.

20 Tom Thatcher ("Jesus, Judas, and Peter : Character by Contrast in the Fourth Gospel," *BSac* 153 [1996]: *passim*) claims that one of the major conflicts for Peter's character is whether or not he will submit to Jesus' control. Here, then, he is placed by Jesus under Jesus' control, but later will try to break free from this yoke, only to end in failure.

21 As I noted earlier in this dissertation, and noticed also by Lindars: "According to John, the first disciples follow Jesus, not in response to a call *in vacuo*, as it were, but as a direct result of the Baptist's witness"; Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John: Based on the Revised Standard Version* (NCB; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1981), 112.

22 Cf. Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 18,1 (PG 59.114–115):

Now, kindly consider this fact, too—that when he said: "He it is who is to come after me, who has been set above me," and: "I am not worthy to loose the strap of his sandal," he won no one over. But, when he spoke about the redemption and brought his speech to a more humble level (περὶ τῆς οἰκονομίας διελέχθη, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ ταπεινότερον τὸν λόγον ἤγαγε), the disciples followed Christ. Further, this is not the only conclusion that emerges from this incident, but we may also observe that most men are attracted, not so much when something great and sublime is said about God, as when mention is made of his kindness and mercy (χρηστὸν καὶ φιλόανθρωπον) or of something conducive to the salvation of those who are listening.

though they know little about him. Through a brief dialogue, where Jesus first speaks (significantly, in the form of a question, itself an invitation to pursue) the first two disciples begin to follow (ἀκολουθεῖν) and abide (μενεῖν) with Jesus (1:37–39).²³ While the exchange is brief, Jesus' invitation for the men to "come and see," as opposed to answering their question directly (1:39), leads the men to discover more organically and gradually who he is.²⁴

One figure in this scene invites further investigation, however. Up to 1:40, the reader knows nothing about the two disciples of John except that they were initially disciples of John (1:35). Yet the Evangelist gives a name to one: "Andrew the brother of Simon Peter" (1:40). In the remainder of Chapter 1 (1:51), the Evangelist will introduce three other disciples, all of them named: Peter, Philip, and Nathanael. This leaves still one unnamed disciple, whose identity remains frustratingly uncertain in the text.²⁵ Indeed, once Andrew is named, the other disciple will melt into the background, incorporated into the collective figure of οἱ μαθηταὶ that appears in 2:2 and beyond. He will not be the last disciple to remain nameless, as later in the narrative the Evangelist will speak of οἱ δώδεκα, yet will only provide his readers with a handful of names for those disciples.²⁶

Some have suggested, however, a possible connection of this unnamed disciple in 1:35–40 with another, more prominent unnamed follower of Jesus, whom scholars have dubbed "the Beloved Disciple" (though the Evangelist refers to him with the longer epithet of "the disciple whom Jesus loved").²⁷

23 These two verbs reappear throughout the Gospel as key verbs pertaining to discipleship: ἀκολουθεῖν: 1:43; 4:40; 8:12; 10:4, 5, 27; 12:26; 21:19–22; μενεῖν: 2:12; 8:31; 12:46; 14:17; 15:4–15.

24 Chrysostom (*Hom. Jo.* 20.1 [PG 59.123]): "He did not call anyone who had not first joined his company. And he acted in this way not without purpose, but in keeping with his wisdom and prudence. When men were not disposed to seek his company, if he himself put pressure on them to follow him, they would perhaps even have turned away from him. But as it was, when they had chosen of their own volition to follow him, they would remain faithful in the future." See also J.H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John* (ed. Alan Hugh McNeile; ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1928), 1.56.

25 See also the discussion in Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 133–134.

26 Beutler, for one, sees no special significance to the identity of the "other disciple" here, unlike in 18:15; Johannes Beutler, *Das Johannesevangelium: Kommentar* (Freiburg: Herder, 2013), 111.

27 Beck (*The Discipleship Paradigm*, 110–111) argues that making "the Beloved Disciple" a stand-in for a proper name cuts against the Evangelist's attempt to portray him as anonymous, a trait that, for Beck, is one of the major markers of an ideal disciple. On various attempts to ascertain the identity of this disciple, see Hengel, *The Johannine Question*; R. Alan Culpepper, *John, the Son of Zebedee: The Life of A Legend* (University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 56–88; James H. Charlesworth, *The Beloved Disciple: Whose Witness*

Rather than understand these two anonymous characters as separate, some have argued that the Evangelist has subtly introduced the Beloved Disciple here, as the companion of Andrew and a disciple of John.²⁸ This view has much to commend it, especially in view of the Beloved Disciple's ultimate role as an ideal witness: he is ideal not only because he was present at the crucial moments at the *end* of Jesus' career, but was a party to the events of Jesus' ministry from the outset.²⁹ Moreover, Jesus treats this disciple not like Peter in the hands-on kind of way, but rather invites the disciple to be with Jesus and see for himself—not unlike Jesus' interactions with the Beloved Disciple later in the Gospel. Identifying this figure as such would also make the Beloved Disciple a follower uniquely equipped to describe the exact nature of the relationship between John the Baptist and Jesus. The Evangelist gives his readers no firm reason, though, to fuse the identities "other disciple" of 1:35–40 and the Beloved Disciple, and so this remains at best an intriguing possibility.³⁰

"You are the Holy One of God" (6:68–69)

The next time the Evangelist mentions Peter comes at the end of the "bread of life" discourse (6:25–59). Throughout the discourse, the Jewish crowds have had some difficulty in accepting the truth of his words, grumbling (v. 41) and arguing among themselves (v. 52). Even some of Jesus' own disciples express their consternation with his teaching, saying, "This message is difficult; who can listen to it?" (v. 60), and "many withdrew and no longer travelled with him" (v. 66). Jesus will use this occasion to invite an open confession from his followers, from and for whom (as will be evident) Peter will emerge as a spokesper-

Validates the Gospel of John? (Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1995); Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: the Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006), 412–71.

- 28 Not least of all, Bauckham (*Eyewitnesses*, 391–92) cites 15:27 ("from the beginning") as retroactively identifying the disciple as the Beloved Disciple, but this may strain the evidence. See also Charlesworth, *The Beloved Disciple*, 326–36; Maynard, "Role," 533; Skinner, *John and Thomas*, 126–127; Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 300–301; all these authors connect this anonymous follower with the Beloved Disciple.
- 29 Bauckham (*Eyewitnesses*, 391–92) notes that in the final scenes of the Gospel (21:20–23), there appear the terms "following," "turning," "seeing," and "abiding," terms also present in 1:35–40, together with the presence of the anonymous follower—the Beloved Disciple—suggests his identity as the anonymous disciple in John 1.
- 30 See also the argument for identifying this figure as the Beloved Disciple in Derek Tovey, "An Anonymous Disciple: A Type of Discipleship," in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Literary Approaches to Sixty-Seven Figures in John* (ed. Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann; WUNT 314; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 135–136.

son. In response to Peter's confession, however, Jesus will challenge the fidelity of Peter (and his fellow disciples), and will try to confront Peter with his capacity for betrayal.

In this time of crisis, there seem only to be two groups: those who stay and those who leave. Yet Jesus recognizes that a third group exists, the few who stay only because they have not yet resolved to leave. So, looking to his disciples who remain—the Twelve—he forces the decision by asking, "You don't want to go too, do you?" (v. 67). The question, beginning with μή, presumes a negative answer, though some readers nevertheless see in the query a hint of Jesus' anxiety about his disciples.³¹ A perception of others' internal states does not elude Jesus at any other point in the Gospel, however. Rather, this question has a rhetorical and pedagogical aim: Jesus knows full well that the Twelve do not intend to leave, but the question is whether *they* know it.³² He will not allow the disciples who remain to follow out of inertia, but will encourage them through this question to reaffirm their commitment.³³

Peter will offer the declaration of such a commitment, revealing an outspokenness that will strongly characterize him later in the narrative. He replies, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have words of eternal life (ρόματα ζωῆς αἰωνίου ἔχεις). We have indeed come to believe and know (ἡμεῖς πεπιστεύκαμεν καὶ ἐγνώκαμεν) that you are the Holy One of God" (vv. 68–69). This answer takes up significant Johannine terms—though in typical Johannine fashion,

31 So C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 252.

32 See also Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 47.3 (PG 59.466), who writes:

Therefore, He said to them: "Do you also wish to go away?" to show once again that He did not need their ministry and worship, and to point out that it was not for this reason that He led them about with Him. . . . But why did He not praise them? Why did He not show admiration of them? In the first place to preserve His dignity as teacher, and, then, to show that it was a necessity for them to be drawn to Him in this way. If He praised them, they would have reacted in human fashion and concluded they were doing Him a favor, but by showing that he did not need their company He held them to Him more firmly. And notice how prudently He spoke. He did not say: "Go away," since that would have been the command of one who was driving them away, but asked a question: "Do you also wish to go away?" These were the words of one avoiding all force and compulsion and not wishing anyone to be bound to Him by a feeling of shame, but, rather, by a feeling of gratitude.

Cf. Farely (Disciples, 47), who makes similar points; see also Philo, *Det.* 58–59, who arrives at nearly the same conclusions as Chrysostom, though interpreting a very different text (Gen. 18:9).

33 See Bultmann, *John*, 448.

the speaker almost certainly fails to appreciate the veracity of his statement.³⁴ On the surface, at any rate, Peter seems to appreciate that Jesus offers something important, and something divine.

Many have noted, however, the atypical honorific spoken here by Peter, “the Holy One of God.” Nowhere else does the Fourth Evangelist make use of this phrase, and the only other time it appears in the New Testament is in Mark 1:24//Luke 4:34, there on the lips of none other than an unclean spirit (or demon). The connection between this Synoptic scene and Peter’s confession finds further strength in Jesus’ response to Peter: “Haven’t I chosen you all as ‘the Twelve’? Yet one of you is a devil (διάβολος)” (John 6:70). In exploring these connections, some interpreters have recalled Peter’s confession in the Synoptics (Mark 8:29, parr.), which includes Jesus invoking the name σατανᾶ, directed to none other than Peter.³⁵ Perhaps the Evangelist, aware of this Synoptic tradition, has conflated these two “confessions,” highlighting the ambiguous nature of Peter’s declaration: while the disciple gets the words right (as in the Synoptics), he still understands Jesus from a worldly—indeed, *demonic*—point of view.³⁶

Nevertheless, such intertextual echoes, along with the possible shadow hanging over Peter’s confession, seem to wither away in one fell swoop: “Now he was talking about Judas . . . who was going to betray him—one of ‘the Twelve’ ” (6:71). Peter may still not recognize the depth of his confession, but this narrator’s interjection makes clear the identity of the “devil” about whom Jesus spoke.³⁷ Even so, in the narrative world the characters have only heard Jesus’ statement that “one of you is a devil” (6:70), lacking the benefit of the Evangelist’s interpretive comment. Perhaps like the rhetorical question earlier (v. 67), Jesus has so responded in order to provoke reflection within the Twelve. Chrysostom makes just such a claim, suggesting that Jesus’ comment, “One of you is a devil,” was uttered to arouse in all the disciples a fear of betraying him.³⁸ That is, Jesus does not praise the disciples simply for staying, even with such high praise as Peter has lauded upon him. Rather, Jesus immediately disrupts any self-confidence they may have had by raising a vague suspicion against one of their number—even, perhaps, against the confessor

34 For a fuller explication of the nuances of this confession, see William Domeris, “The Confession of Peter according to John 6:69,” *TynBul* 44 (1993): 155–67.

35 E.g., Beutler, *Johannesevangelium*, 230–32.

36 Maynard, “Role,” 543–44.

37 So Colleen M. Conway, *Men and Women in the Fourth Gospel: Gender and Johannine Characterization* (SBLDS 167; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 168.

38 Chrysostom, *Hom. Jo.* 47.4 (PG 59.467).

himself, Peter. Thus, Jesus has challenged Peter's confident claim of fidelity and understanding.

Two Portraits of Peter

In these early instances of Jesus' interactions with Peter, the Evangelist gives the reader two portraits of the disciple.³⁹ In the first, he characterizes Peter as quiescent and passive, one whose mode of following Jesus is submission. In the second, Peter takes much greater initiative, even bravado, as he declares his (and his colleagues') unwavering commitment to following Jesus. Admirable as the latter may appear, however, the Johannine Jesus responds by questioning the quality of this allegiance. As the narrative comes to a climax, the reader will come to see Peter's commitment to Jesus as misguided, and one that reflects a failure to understand Jesus' mission. Peter's willingness to act on his own initiative, as evidenced by his assumption of leadership in John 6, will be the very trait Jesus must force Peter to overcome—even if that means leading Peter to face his own capacity for betrayal and unfaithfulness, an educative ploy on Jesus' part that will become more manifest in the scene where Peter next appears.

Misunderstanding, Mystery, and Misguided Promises: John 13

The next time Peter emerges from among the mass of disciples in John, Jesus is sharing his last moments with the Twelve before his death. Yet in these final hours, Jesus will engage in some of the most challenging teaching and shaping of Peter and of another, "the disciple Jesus loved," to guide both characters toward the goal he has for each. In John 13, the primary forms of his pedagogy will be (a) his gesture of servitude in washing his disciples' feet, (b) his promise that one of those present will betray him, and (c) the giving of the "new commandment."⁴⁰ In these, Jesus takes up the same posture of pedagogical adaptability that has characterized his interactions with others throughout the Gospel. In particular, his dialogues with Peter challenge the disciple's understanding of and commitment to him, which is a part of Jesus' larger pedagogic scheme. This scene will also give occasion to discuss the relationship between Jesus and "the disciple Jesus loved," namely, the degree of intimacy shared by

39 Contra Labahn, "Simon Peter," 156, who argues that in both the early scenes, Peter comes across as a "rock and a model of faith," though he agrees that later on this is not the case.

40 This third locus is not entirely distinct from the footwashing, but is intimately bound up with the symbolic gesture and the explanation of the act.

this anonymous figure, and how this pertains to Jesus' shaping of that character. Notably, Jesus' activity will be much more straightforward and overt with Peter, while he remains less visibly active in the formation of the Beloved Disciple.

Misunderstanding: The Washing of the Disciples' Feet (13:1–18)

The first moment of instruction in John 13 arises out of Jesus' concern for his disciples, as well as from his knowledge of the impending betrayal (13:1–3). In a description reminiscent of the portrayal of the Good Shepherd,⁴¹ Jesus lays down (τίθησιν) his outer garment and takes up (λάβων) a towel, and begins washing the feet of his disciples (vv. 4–5).⁴² Jesus himself will explain the significance of this act shortly, but before the explanation a conflict arises between Jesus and Peter about this act's appropriateness. In resisting what he does not understand, Peter will show himself as one who fails to understand Jesus' identity, and moreover as one who seriously misunderstands Jesus' mission—not unlike the Synoptic Peter at Caesarea Philippi.⁴³

When Jesus comes to Peter, the disciple objects, “Do *you* wash my feet?” (v. 6). At his last appearance in Capernaum, Peter seemed to be on the right track, but here his words reveal that he has failed to grasp what the Johannine Jesus is doing.⁴⁴ Peter cannot accept that Jesus, his lord and teacher (cf. v. 13), should debase himself by taking on a slave's errand.⁴⁵ He cannot see how Jesus, “the Holy One of God” (6:69), could act like a mere servant. As Peter and Jesus discuss the matter further, this failure to understand will become even more pronounced.⁴⁶ Jesus responds to him, “You do not right now under-

41 See 10:17–18: ἐγὼ τίθημι τὴν ψυχὴν μου, ἵνα πάλιν λάβω αὐτήν. οὐδεὶς αἴρει αὐτὴν ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τίθημι αὐτήν ἀπ' ἐμαυτοῦ. ἐξουσίαν ἔχω θεῖναι αὐτήν, καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχω πάλιν λαβεῖν αὐτήν. Cf. Barrett, *St. John*, 366; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003), 2.902; Andrew T. Lincoln, *The Gospel According to Saint John* (BNTC 4; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005), 306.

42 As noted in the chapter 4, this would recall in the minds of readers the act of Mary in Bethany only a few scenes earlier.

43 Mark 8:32//Matt. 16:22. Also noted by Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John* (trans. Kevyn Smith; New York: Crossroad, 1982), 3.18; Lincoln, *John*, 368.

44 As Labahn (“Simon Peter,” 156) puts it: “Peter is presented as the disciple who acknowledges Jesus' role as master but does not accept Christ in the Johannine way.”

45 Jean Zumstein, *L'évangile selon Saint Jean (13–21)* (CNT IVb; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2007), 27.

46 As Keener notes (*John*, 2.209), another protest arose earlier in the Gospel regarding what one person did for another's feet: when Judas protested Mary's anointing of Jesus' feet (12:1–8).

stand what I am doing, but you will understand after these things" (13:7).⁴⁷ He does not rebuke Peter for failing to understand, because he knows that such understanding will come with time.⁴⁸ Indeed, Peter's lack of comprehension is understandable. So Jesus only invites Peter to trust, to allow him to perform this deed.

Peter rejects this out of hand. For him, it is too great an impropriety, and so he tells Jesus in no uncertain terms: "May you never wash my feet; not ever!" (v. 8a).⁴⁹ Faced with Peter's stubbornness, Jesus must make use of an alternate method. To draw Peter toward a clearer understanding of his deed, he makes clear that only in allowing him to perform this service will Peter have a "portion" (μέρος) with him (v. 8b). He makes the choice clear: either Peter allows him to wash his feet, or else Peter will effectively deny his relationship with Jesus. In order to follow Jesus, Peter must submit to Jesus' will rather than impose his own upon Jesus.

Peter's response to Jesus, however, entails another attempt to control Jesus. Unlike the Peter of John 1:40–42, the character here is not one who willingly submits to the master, but one who seeks to control the situation. The teacher has come to wash his feet, and after resisting the act altogether, then requests that Jesus wash also his hands and his head (v. 9). The disciple refuses to submit fully, and Jesus carefully rebukes him again by answering, "Someone who has bathed does not need to wash anything but his feet, since he is entirely clean" (v. 10a). Jesus, not Peter, will decide what does and does not need washed, and thus rebuffs Peter's attempt to commandeer his activity.

After washing their feet, Jesus then explains his action to his disciples, and in so doing, instructs them on what it means to follow him.⁵⁰ "Do you understand (γινώσκετε) what I have done for you? . . . I have given you an example (ὑπόδειγμα), so that you might also do as I have done for you" (v. 12, 15). He did

47 "These things" refer almost certainly to Jesus' death and resurrection, as noted by, e.g., Bultmann, *John*, 467; Barrett, *St. John*, 367.

48 Zumstein, *Jean* (13–21), 27; cf. Blaine, *Peter in the Gospel of John*, 65: "Knowing Peter's mind better than the disciple does—and perhaps having a better opinion of his intrinsic value—Jesus handles this initial exclamation with equanimity. . . ."

49 Peter's statement that Jesus will by no means wash his feet "ever," or εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, is filled with irony, since what Jesus offers in this act is in part a share (μέρος, v. 8b) in eternal life; cf. Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 588.

50 Contra Beutler, who sees two distinct interpretations in the footwashing: the first being the meaning of the act for the disciples (and in so doing, foreshadowing the passion), and a separate instruction on mutual service after Jesus' departure; *Johannesevangelium*, 377. Yet to create such a distinction seems unnecessary, especially with the echoes of the Shepherd Discourse in the footwashing scene.

not wash their feet simply as an act to demonstrate his service to them, but to instruct them in the way they should treat one another. In this way, it is an extension of his action as the noble shepherd: just as he would soon lay down (τίθημι) his life and take it up (λάβω) again (10:17–18), he has laid down (τίθησιν) his garments in this act of humble service, to take up (ἐλάβεν) his garments again and resume his position as teacher (13:4, 12).⁵¹ Notably, the one who resisted this act the most, Peter, is the one Jesus will choose as the future shepherd, the one who will pursue the will of God rather than his own. Between this point in the narrative and the close, then, Jesus will need to somehow transform the self-determined man into one whose life is determined by God.

Mystery: The Betrayal Prediction (13:18–30)

In the remainder of John 13:18–38, Jesus' attempts to guide Peter will stand in contrast to his relationship with another disciple, the Beloved Disciple, making his first indisputable appearance in the narrative. The contrast will highlight in particular two things: first, the differences between the two disciples, with one more proactive (Peter) and the other more passive (the Beloved Disciple); second, the different ways Jesus guides both men, whether directly (as with Peter) or more subtly (as he does the Beloved Disciple). The Evangelist will also indicate that neither disciple is yet ready to take on the role for which Jesus is preparing them, whether as shepherd or witness.

After explaining the significance of the footwashing to the disciples, Jesus then turns to describe his impending betrayal by one of those he has chosen, and in response both Peter and “the disciple whom Jesus loved” get involved. Jesus tells the disciples plainly: “One of you will betray me” (v. 21). The disciples, struck with wonder, ask among themselves about the identity of this one, likely with the same kind of self-questioning seen in the Synoptic parallels (v. 22; cf. Mark 14:19//Matt. 26:22.). Yet not content simply to wonder to himself, Peter shows his initiative by urging the Beloved Disciple, reclining on Jesus' chest, to ask Jesus to identify the traitor (vv. 23–24).

This brief description of Peter and the Beloved Disciple, taking up all of two verses, tells the reader a good deal about both Peter and the Beloved Disciple. Peter demonstrates further, in line with his actions in John 6 and earlier in John 13, that he is not unwilling to try to manage a situation or to take charge. Before, he acted as the spokesperson for the disciples (6:69) and tried to keep Jesus from engaging in what he thought was a debasing act (13:8). Here, he

51 Zumstein (*Jean* (13–21), 28) describes the act as “une prolepse de la croix”; thus, for Peter to reject this act would be to reject Jesus' eventual death—which he later seems to do in 18:10.

tries to bring the betrayer's identity into the open, showing both initiative and an eagerness to lead.⁵² The Beloved Disciple, on the other hand, appears as an altogether passive character, acting only in response to Peter's prompt.⁵³ He is also one who is in a position of intimacy with Jesus. He not only reclines *beside* Jesus in a position of honor, but he also reclines upon his master's chest (ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, 13:23).⁵⁴ This word κόλπος appears only one other time in the Fourth Gospel, when the narrator is describing Jesus' relationship to the Father: μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς (1:18).⁵⁵ In the prologue this relation to the Father indicates why Jesus is uniquely equipped to explain (ἐξηγήσατο) the otherwise unseen God. The Evangelist's description of the Beloved Disciple in such a way suggests that Jesus has determined to make out of him someone who will explain him to others in the same way Jesus explained God to the world. This disciple has been uniquely positioned—by Jesus—to observe things others could not, indicating a rather subtle psychagogy on Jesus' part.⁵⁶ Encouraging intimacy and affection, rather than offering direct instruction and rebuke, is how the Johannine Jesus guides this disciple.

One cannot say, however, that the Beloved Disciple appears ready to play this role just yet.⁵⁷ The disciple asks Jesus, "Lord, who is it?" (13:25), to which Jesus responds rather cryptically, indicating his betrayer by means of a dipped

52 As Zumstein (*Jean* (13–21), 38) notes, Peter appears here as elsewhere, i.e., as leader of the Twelve, while the Beloved Disciple appears as he will throughout the remainder of the Gospel, i.e., as a mediator between Christ and his followers.

53 See JoAnn A. Brant, *Dialogue and Drama: Elements of Greek Tragedy in the Fourth Gospel* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2004), 199. Brant notes that one of the things that sets the Beloved Disciple apart is not only his passivity, but that he says almost nothing in the Gospel itself by way of direct speech, save his speech at 21:7.

54 Bauckham ("Beloved Disciple," 33) rightly notes that "the beloved disciple has the place of special intimacy next to Jesus at the supper, which it is not possible for more than one disciple to occupy, and he is therefore uniquely placed to enquire and be enlightened as to Jesus' meaning and purpose." Contra Bauckham, however, I will argue that this intimacy does not entail full comprehension until the close of the Gospel.

55 Barrett, *St. John*, 372; Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 121; Resseguie, "Beloved Disciple," 540; Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 598; Beutler, *Johannesevangelium*, 386.

56 That this is a sign of his intimacy the Evangelist indicates further by repeating the phrase later on; v. 25, 21:20 (though the latter with the noun στήθος).

57 As Lincoln (*John*, 378–79) notes, if the Beloved Disciple has understood what Jesus has said, "his knowledge does not affect the action, just as it does not in his depiction in 19.35 and 20.8. He does not tell Peter and does not, of course, do anything to dissuade Judas from his course of action. . . . The statement of v. 28, that no one knew why Jesus had said what he said to Judas, takes no account of the exchange between Jesus and the Beloved Disciple."

morsel, which he then proceeds to give to Judas (v. 26). Jesus then gives a command to the now Satan-possessed Judas to go and perform the deed, but the Evangelist notes: “none of those reclining understood why he had said this to him” (v. 28). Many have wanted to exempt the Beloved Disciple, whom they hold as imminently insightful and perceptive, from this general ignorance.⁵⁸ Such a view, however, amounts to special pleading: presumably when the Evangelist says “none” (οὐδείς) he means that nobody, not even the disciple leaning upon Jesus’ breast, understood what had just taken place, at least not until after the resurrection.⁵⁹ Little, save the interpreter’s desire to exonerate this disciple from the incomprehension of his colleagues, suggests that he alone understood what had transpired before his eyes that very moment, even if he was privy to Jesus’ words and the others were not.⁶⁰ This will not be the last time interpreters contort the text to make this disciple the perfect witness from start to finish, rather than someone who became, through the guidance of Jesus, an ideal witness. Furthermore, were this disciple already within the narrative an ideal witness, readers should then expect him to offer testimony to his colleagues, and so bring them to understanding. He does not; his witness takes place only later to the Gospel audience.

That does not mean, however, that one cannot see in this first appearance how the disciple is particularly suited to serve as an ideal witness. Nor does it mean that one cannot say anything about Jesus’ role in equipping him as such a witness. Jesus has, to be sure, positioned this disciple to be in an intimate relationship with him, so that later on he might be able to offer reliable testimony about the events that will unfold in this scene (as well as the crucial scenes about to take place). This disciple also has a knack for noticing details (like the dipping of the bread), certainly a desirable trait in a witness, even if he lacks comprehension of those details in the narrative present. Having proximity and access to Jesus does not end here, either, but will continue as he

58 E.g., Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 121; Bauckham, “Beloved Disciple,” 34–35; Lincoln, *John*, 381; I share the view, though, of Colleen M. Conway, “Speaking through Ambiguity: Minor Characters in the Fourth Gospel,” *BibInt* 10 (2002): 339. See also Barrett (*St. John*, 364), who similarly views the Beloved Disciple as unaware, at least of the meaning of Jesus’ statement.

59 Beck (*The Discipleship Paradigm*, 114) puts it succinctly: “verse 28 specifically refutes the claim that anyone other than Jesus shared that knowledge.” See also Zumstein, *Jean* (13–21), 39; and especially Susan Hulen, *Imperfect Believers: Ambiguous Characters in the Gospel of John* (Westminster John Knox, 2009), 95–96, who makes a larger argument that this disciple, while ideal, is by no means perfect.

60 See the discussion of motivations regarding the presentation of the Beloved Disciple in Charlesworth, *The Beloved Disciple*, 81–83.

remains close to Jesus throughout the arrest and his crucifixion. All of this will allow him in the end to fulfill his role as ideal witness, not only to the events of Jesus' life, but also their significance. Time must pass in the narrative, however, before readers behold this disciple acting not as a passive observer, but as an active witness.

Misguided Promises: Peter's Avowal of Love (13:31–38)

Once Judas has left the party, Jesus engages in much more direct and thorough instruction of his disciples. Among other things, he promises them that his departure is near and they will not be able to go with him (v. 33). Yet he follows this prediction with the new commandment, phrased in a way that recalls the command for the footwashing:

καθὼς ἐγὼ ἐποίησα ὑμῖν καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιῆτε (13:15)
καθὼς ἠγάπησα ὑμᾶς ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀγαπᾶτε ἀλλήλους (13:34)

Both these passages involve commands, and in truth the “new commandment” serves as a fuller explication of the command to “wash one another’s feet” (v. 14).⁶¹ As noted, the footwashing was to be understood as an expression of the disposition of the Good Shepherd, to lay down his life for others, motivated by the very love highlighted in 13:34. Later on in the Farewell Discourse, Jesus will make plain the connection between these two commandments much more explicit: “No one has a greater love than this: that someone would *lay down one’s life for* one’s friends (μερίζον ἀγάπην οὐδεὶς ἔχει, ἵνα τις τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ θῇ ὑπὲρ τῶν φίλων αὐτοῦ)” (15:13). This mirrors Jesus’ statement about the Good Shepherd in 10:11, where he identifies the Shepherd as one who lays down his life for the sheep.⁶² If the disciples want to fulfill Jesus’ commandment, they will need to follow in the path set out for them by Jesus himself. If any disciple—like Peter—might presume to take the mantle of leadership after Jesus’ departure, he cannot do so without such a willingness to part with his life.

Peter himself ignores the command altogether, however, and instead asks Jesus about this impending departure: “Lord, where are you going?” (13:36a). Peter does not yet understand Jesus’ destiny, much less what he is calling his disciples to do. Peter’s sole focus is on the pain of anticipated absence.⁶³ But

61 Zumstein, *Jean* (13–21), 53.

62 Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς. ὁ ποιμὴν ὁ καλὸς τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ τίθησιν ὑπὲρ τῶν προβάτων (10:11).

63 See Eva Krafft, “Die Personen des Johannesevangeliums,” *EvT* 16 (1956): 24: “Petrus versteht nicht, daß die Nachfolge eine willige Übernahme von Leiden und Tod ist, für

Jesus reassures him, “You cannot follow (ἀκολουθήσαι)⁶⁴ me where I am going now—but you *will* follow later on” (13:36b). Here, Jesus tries to point the disciple in the right direction, to enable him to accept the role Jesus has chosen for him as one who will shepherd the sheep and, consequently, lay down his life for them. But Jesus also indicates that Peter’s time has not yet come, and that Peter is not presently ready for such a sacrifice.

Peter insists, however, that he will go with Jesus to the very end: “Lord, why can I not follow you even now? I will lay down my life for you (τὴν ψυχὴν μου ὑπὲρ σοῦ θήσω)” (v. 37).⁶⁵ He evokes the behavior of the Good Shepherd here (cf. 10:11), claiming that he can fulfill such a role.⁶⁶ His vow also points forward to the singular act that Jesus will describe as epitomizing “no greater love” (15:13).⁶⁷ Peter is overestimating his commitment, however, and mischaracterizes the exact form of the love that Jesus himself will show in death. In the arrest scene, Peter will attempt to carry out his promise by risking his life in a violent struggle, but this reflects a failed understanding of the nature of the self-sacrifice Jesus desires.⁶⁸

Jesus’ response to this vow does not address Peter’s failure to understand, but rather his inability to carry it out. Jesus tells him directly: “You would lay down your life for me, would you? I tell you the truth: the rooster will not even crow until you have denied me thrice” (13:38). Not only can Peter not make

ihn bedeutet Nachfolge heroischen Einsatz des Lebens für Jesus. Wieder hat er Jesu Selbstentäußerung bis in den Tod hinein nicht begriffen. Wunderbar aber ist, wie gerade in diesem Augenblick des Mißverständnisses Jesus ihm seine eigentliche Bestimmung ganz enthüllt, ‘Später’ wird Petrus seinem Herrn tatsächlich folgen, auch in Leiden und Tod. Der, der als erster der Jünger die Hoheit Jesu erkannt hat, wird erst dann zum Felsen werden, wenn er auch die Niedrigkeit verstanden und auf sich genommen hat.”

64 See Wayne A. Meeks, “The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism,” *JBL* 91 (1972): 64. There, Meeks notes the equivalence of discipleship and death in Jesus’ statement.

65 Meeks (*ibid.*, 65) notes that Peter rightly perceives what Jesus means by “departing.”

66 Culpepper, “Peter,” 169. Elsewhere, Culpepper (*Anatomy*, 174–175) refers to Peter as the ἀλαζών, the boastful man of Theophrastus’ *Characters*. Cf. also Zumstein, *Jean* (13–21), 55.

67 D. Moody Smith, *John* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), 260: “[T]here is a touch of irony in the fact that while Peter will not lay down his life for Jesus at this crisis point in Jesus’ ministry, but will rather deny him, later on, ‘afterward,’ he will die a martyr’s death.” Smith goes on (261) to connect this scene to 18:10 and 18:17, as in the former Peter seems committed to lay down his life, and in the latter (only hours later) Peter denies Jesus.

68 Lincoln (*John*, 388) characterizes this exchange quite well: “[Peter] has not understood the crucial distinction between ‘now’ and ‘later’ in Jesus’ words. Not until Jesus’ hour has been completed and his love demonstrated in death will Peter have the resources for living out Jesus’ model (cf. 21:18–19).” Cf. also Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (SP 4; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998), 386.

good on his promise, but, even worse, he will soon deny his association with his master outright.⁶⁹ Chrysostom describes the purpose of this harsh response on Jesus' part:

Since he who made a practice of contradicting Christ was likely to be puffed up with pride even to the point of foolishness, He instructed him not to resist Him in the future. . . . Indeed, since Peter's great love had made him inclined to contradict Christ, He finally placed a curb on him, in order that he might not also have this inclination in the later period when he would assume the control of the world, but that, on the contrary, being mindful of his past experience, he might recognize his own limitations.⁷⁰

Jesus does not simply aim to deflate Peter's estimation of his loyalty. The prophecy would have a threefold effect: First, it would check Peter's zeal, at least to a degree. Second, by way of prophecy, when Peter had in fact denied Jesus, he might be reminded of this promise and so be filled with grief over his wrongdoing.⁷¹ Third, as Chrysostom notes, the effect of this exchange had potentially positive benefits extending beyond the narrative of the Gospel itself, into Peter's own life as a leader in the church. Thus the rebuff, rather than serving primarily as a means to indicate Jesus' divine foreknowledge, is above all intended for Peter's formation so that "later" (13:36) he might with understanding fulfill his promise to lay down his life.

When looking at Jesus' treatment of these two disciples, some in the ancient world might have levied criticisms against this depiction of Jesus. He appears inconstant: he favors one student for no clear reason, and the most vocally committed follower he rebukes (and openly so); he allows one student as his intimate, while the other he treats coolly, if not with contempt.⁷² What

69 Blaine (*Peter in the Gospel of John*, 77) reads against the grain of the text when he suggests that the reference to Peter's *future* fulfillment of this promise to lay down his life somehow softens the blow of Peter's denial. The *pathos* of the Gospel at Peter's denial of Jesus, however, strongly militates against such a reading. Schnackenburg (*St. John*, 56) for his part rightly characterizes Peter's response as an unwillingness to "deny his own will, listen to Jesus' words (13:36ff) and let himself be led even to where"—and I might add "when"—"he does not want to go." Peter's time will come, but not now.

70 *Hom. Jo.* 73.1 (PG 59.395–96).

71 This is made explicit in the Synoptics (Mark 14:72, *parr.*), though not in the Fourth Gospel, where Peter's grief is displaced to the scene of his "rehabilitation" in 21:15–17.

72 In this way, Jesus risks the criticisms of being an inconstant man, in the same way Odysseus was prone to scorn for his changeable behavior; cf. William Bedell Stanford, *The*

reason has the Johannine Jesus for treating these two disciples so differently? One option, that of seeing Johannine Christianity pitted against Petrine Christianity in the guise of their two champions, has been tried and the evidence for this historical reconstruction found too scarce. Another solution has been to identify one character's discipleship as more ideal than the other's, and many scholars have dismissed this as well. Adaptability, however, allows for a reading that addresses both the two modes of interacting with these disciples. Jesus does not prefer one to the other. Rather, Jesus has two very different aims in mind for these very different men, and these facts require him to act differently toward each.

Jesus' formation of both Peter and the Beloved Disciple reflects this. Jesus is constantly checking Peter and reining him in. Jesus warns Peter against trying to control him and against overestimating his own loyalty. He even goes so far to promise Peter's denial, priming the man for the hour in which the question of his loyalty will be the most pressing.⁷³ All these contribute, with Jesus' other actions toward him up to this point, to the forming of Peter as a disciple who will, eventually, embody the same self-sacrificing love that characterizes Jesus' own life. As for "the disciple Jesus loved," Jesus has made him an intimate relation, granting him a front-row seat to the key events of Jesus' last hours. Once placed in such a position, this disciple will remain near at hand until the very end. In so situating him, Jesus shapes him into the perfect candidate to provide witness to those who will follow Jesus later. The two purposes set out for these two disciples, in their own way fitting for each, require from Jesus two very different approaches: one is overt and deliberate, while the other remains subtle and suggestive.

Peter's Double Betrayal: John 18

In two scenes, the garden arrest and the interrogation before Annas, Jesus and his disciples are separated from one another, causing a crisis of discipleship. For no one is this crisis greater than for Simon Peter, who appears in stark relief to Jesus on several levels throughout these two scenes. Peter also stands in contrast to two other disciples: first, Judas, whose own betrayal of Jesus will set the context for Peter's actions both in the garden and in the courtyard, coloring

Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero (2nd ed.; Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1968).

73 Cf. Conway, *Men and Women*, 173, who notes that the vast majority of Peter's appearances in 6 and 13 come in the context of betrayal; see also Skinner, *John and Thomas*, 93.

Peter's behavior in both scenes as a variation on the betrayal of Judas. Second, the Evangelist contrasts Peter to the anonymous "other disciple," whom I will (for reasons explained below) identify as "the disciple Jesus loved," who remains close to his master from the arrest to the crucifixion. For this disciple, the crisis of Jesus' arrest only brings him opportunities to observe various details of Jesus' final hours, details that will lend further support to his role as ideal witness—but only in the narrative future. More central to the action of this chapter, though, is Peter's plunge into a double-betrayal of Jesus: first through his failed attempt to circumvent Jesus' death, and second through his denial of his identity as Jesus' disciple. Yet even this betrayal can be regarded as an important stage in Peter's transformation from self-determined to submissive.

In the Garden (18:1–11)

The scene opens in a garden, a place Jesus often gathered with his disciples (18:1–2). Judas, together with the troops of the Jewish authorities, arrives at the same place, intent on having Jesus arrested (v. 3). Jesus, "knowing fully what was to happen to him,"⁷⁴ asks the group a question quite similar to the question he asked of his first disciples: "Whom do you seek (τίνα ζητεῖτε)?" (v. 4).⁷⁵ When they reply that they are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, he responds, "I am (ἐγώ εἰμι)" (v. 5a). At this point, the Evangelist notes Judas' presence among them: εἰσπήκει δὲ καὶ Ἰούδας ὁ παραδιδούς αὐτὸν μετ' αὐτῶν (v. 5b). After they fall back, Jesus asks them again about their quarry, and they answer, "Jesus the Nazarene" (v. 7). He reaffirms his identity as the man, yet pleads for the release of his disciples (v. 8) to fulfill his own words in 17:12 (18:9), and also in line with his words about the actions of the Noble Shepherd (10:28; cf. 10:10).⁷⁶ In so doing, he makes evident once more that he is the Noble Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep, who protects them from those who would seek their harm.

This rehearsal of events brings to light several aspects of Peter's actions in both the garden and the courtyard (18:18–27). Judas has betrayed Jesus by bringing armed guards to have him arrested; now Peter will betray Jesus by taking up arms himself: "Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the

74 Translation from Brown, *John*, 2.805. See also Smith, *John*, 329: "Although Judas leads the arresting party, Jesus seizes the initiative in a manner that is fully, and uniquely, Johannine (v. 4)."

75 1:38: τί ζητεῖτε; Though, as Parsenios notes, the two kinds of "seeking" implied in these two scenes are of very different kinds (*Rhetoric and Drama*, 78–82).

76 For a fuller analysis of the intertextuality between this scene and that of John 10, see Zumstein, *Jean* (13–21), 202.

slave of the high priest, and cut off his right ear" (18:10).⁷⁷ Peter demonstrates in this one act the height of his misunderstanding of Jesus' mission: whereas Peter wants to defend Jesus through violence, Jesus will defend Peter (and the rest of the Twelve) *succumbing* to violence in his death (cf. 10:11, 15; 18:8). Peter acts, moreover, to circumvent that very hour to which Jesus' entire career has been driving. He has betrayed the very essence of Jesus' mission.⁷⁸

The teacher does not mince words with his wayward follower: "Put the sword in its sheath! Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given me?" (v. 11).⁷⁹ This is the frank correction of a student from his master. The Johannine Jesus also raises a key (rhetorical) question with Peter about his divinely ordained fate. Jesus is not on a suicide mission, he makes clear, but is submitting to the plan of the Father—the very posture Jesus has worked to inculcate within Peter. So he puts the question to Peter, in effect: "Will you resist God's plans in pursuit of your own?" In an odd twist, then, Judas (the traitor) appears as one who acts in line with God's will, while Peter (the disciple) stands in the way. Yet while Jesus has resigned Judas to his diabolical fate, he still holds out hope for Peter's future, and accommodates to guide him to that end, to reshape his commitment to one that pursues the Father's plans rather than his own. Even in his final hours, the educator is still at work among his followers.

77 Burnet ("Pierre, apôtre entre Judas et le disciple bien-aimé." *ETR* 77 (2002): 109) understates the depths of Peter's error here: "Pierre, confronté à Judas, en sort résolument à son avantage: face à la figure du traître, il apparaît comme le bon disciple fidèle à son maître malgré ses incompréhensions et son impétuosité." It is not that Peter simply fails to understand: his actions go against the grain of Jesus' very mission. Krafft ("Personen," 24) suggests this very point: "Es erscheint in diesem Zusammenhang nicht gleichgültig, daß Johannes es ist, der als erster berichtet, Petrus habe bei der Gefangennahme Jesu einem Kriegsknecht das Ohr abgehauen (18,10)." Cf. also Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 711; Beutler, *Johannesevangelium*, 473.

78 Blaine (*Peter in the Gospel of John*, 88–89) claims that Peter is here only trying to protect Jesus, to keep his master from harm, and Shepherd suggests that Peter attempts to display the ἀγάπη of the true friend (13:34–38); David Shepherd, "Do You Love Me? A Narrative-Critical Reappraisal of ἀγαπάω and φιλέω in John 21:15–17," *JBL* 129 (2010): 784. Both may be right, but their views in no way diminish the fact that Peter betrays Jesus' very mission in this misguided endeavor.

79 Barrett (*St. John*, 436) stresses the use of ποτήριον here as an adaptation of the Synoptic tradition (cf. Mark 10:38; 14:36), but that it stresses Jesus' "calm determined acceptance" of his fate, which is "the work appointed him by the Father." Cf. also Moloney, *John*, 484; J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010), 895–96. Droge ("Status," 311) connects this rebuke also to 18:36 ("If my kingdom were of this world, my subjects would fight"), which constitutes "a devastating indictment" of Peter's actions.

In the Courtyard (18:18–27)

After Peter's violent act and Jesus' rebuke of it, Jesus and Peter part ways, and they remain parted until after the resurrection. Jesus is bound and led to Annas (v. 12–13), while Peter follows at a distance, together with "another disciple" (ἄλλος μαθητής) (v. 15). This scene, the identity of the "other disciple," and Peter's actions all require analysis. But first, how is Jesus' pedagogy at work here even though he himself is absent from his disciples?

The answer to this question lies within one of the fundamental assumptions of the Evangelist about Jesus. From start to finish, John's Jesus is a person in control of his own fate, and one whose power to orchestrate events from a distance is evident (as in, e.g., 4:50–53). Nothing occurs in the narrative of the Fourth Gospel apart from the will of God and, by extension, of Jesus. The Evangelist even characterizes the plot to have Jesus killed in 11:45–53 as an out-working of Jesus' mission.⁸⁰ So even what happens to Peter in the courtyard scene can plausibly be understood as an expression of Jesus' ongoing guidance of his disciple. Chrysostom makes this very point, commenting on the prediction of the betrayal:

Christ said: 'You cannot,' and do you [Peter] declare: 'I can'? Well, then, you will learn by experience itself that your love is of no account unless grace from above is present. From this it is clear that Christ permitted that fall of Peter's because of his concern for him. For, even from the first He had been trying to teach him, but because he persisted in his stubborn zeal, He himself did not continue to press him, nor did He force him to the denial, but left him alone so that he might learn his own weakness.⁸¹

That is, as a guide Jesus does not shirk from allowing his student to fail. Peter must come to see for himself that his commitment to Jesus falls far short of his earlier claims (as in 13:37). In the same way that Nicodemus could only receive revelation once he came to his wit's end, so too could Peter begin to understand what it means to be a leader when he saw the frailty of his own discipleship.

In introducing the courtyard scene, the Evangelist notes significantly what Peter and the other disciple do in response to Jesus' arrest: each follows him (ἠκολούθει; 18:15). This term, ἀκολουθεῖν, as in the call of the first disciples

80 See 11:51, regarding Caiaphas' decree to have one many die for the nation: "He did not say this on his own, but being the high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation."

81 *Hom. Jo.* 73.1 (PG 59:395).

(1:35–51) characterizes in the Fourth Gospel the primary act of discipleship, and in using the term the Evangelist makes clear that Peter and his companion are still to be regarded as disciples, at least for the moment.⁸² It is a term that also appears in the Good Shepherd discourse (10:4, 27) as illustrative of what Jesus' flock does.⁸³ Peter himself has also used the term in his earlier promise that he would follow Jesus to the end, even to death (13:37), which suggests that he may yet be attempting to fulfill that vow. Such connections only increase the dramatic irony of Peter's imminent denial of his relationship with Jesus.

Before describing Peter's denial, the Evangelist introduces an enigmatic figure: "the other disciple" (ἄλλος μαθητής; 18:15). Readers know something about him: he is known to the high priest (v. 15), and allows for Peter to enter into the courtyard.⁸⁴ His exact identity, however, remains unclear when this scene is understood on its own. Many have attempted to identify the disciple by reference to other portions of the Gospel, and generally scholars see the figure as none other than the "disciple Jesus loved."⁸⁵ There are several reasons for this: first, in 20:2, the Evangelist makes a reference to "the other disciple (τὸν ἄλλον μαθητήν), the one whom Jesus loved," and refers to him simply as ὁ ἄλλος μαθητής three times further in that chapter (20:3, 4, 8). The second time the Evangelist refers to "two other disciples" (ἄλλοι ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν . . . δύο) is in 21:2, and only these two remain unnamed. From these two will emerge the "disciple Jesus loved" (21:7). So at least four other times in the Gospel, the Evangelist introduces this particular disciple without his characteristic epithet, and does so by referring to him as "the other/another disciple." Additionally, the Beloved Disciple appears in almost every instance (save 19:25–27, 35) together with Peter (cf. 13:23–26; 20:2–10; 21:7, 20–23), something unique to this disciple, and so would plausibly appear opposite to Peter in the courtyard scene.⁸⁶ Finally,

82 This is in spite, however, of Peter's earlier "betrayal." Beutler in particular stresses the irony of Peter "following" Jesus in this scene, given what will come about; *Johannesevangelium*, 475.

83 The connection with this discourse is heightened by the use of ἀλλή in this scene; 10:1, 16; 18:15.

84 For more on the connection of this scene to the Shepherd Discourse, see Mark W.G. Stibbe, *John as Storyteller: Narrative Criticism and the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 104–105.

85 Ibid., 98–99; Farely, *Disciples*, 130.

86 Not insignificantly, the Evangelist seems fond of pairs, such as putting together Philip and Andrew (1:35–51; 6:5–8; 12:21–22), or the pair of Martha and Mary (11:1–12:8). The pairs are such that when one appears, readers cannot be faulted for anticipating their partner. So, when Peter appears here with "another disciple," it is not unreasonable to assume that the other disciple is Peter's "partner" in the Gospel, i.e., the Beloved Disciple. Thyen

at the crucifixion scene, this disciple appears as one who has, unlike the other disciples (including Peter), stayed near to Jesus. It is reasonable, then, to presume that he has not forsaken Jesus even in this initial period of his trial and execution, and that the “other disciple” is none other than “the disciple Jesus loved.”⁸⁷

In this way, then, Jesus can be seen as actively forming (at a distance) not only Peter but also the Beloved Disciple for the particular roles he intends them each to fulfill. Jesus’ prior intimacy with this disciple has resulted in this disciple’s unwillingness to abandon Jesus as so many of his other colleagues have. Moreover, his presence at this first part of Jesus’ trial underscores the fact that Jesus has chosen well the person who will serve best as the ideal and perceptive witness. Again, this testifies to a very subtle guidance at work on Jesus’ part. This disciple, driven by his concern for Jesus, will be party to these most intense and intimate moments of Jesus’ final hours, and in so doing is unique among all of Jesus’ followers. In this scene specifically, the disciple’s connection to the high priest (18:16) gives him special access to this climactic moment. Jesus has chosen the right person, with the right connections, to be in the best position to witness to later believers about what had taken place in these final hours.

His connectedness matters not only for his own future, however, but also for Peter’s. In some ways, the access this disciple grants to Peter enables Peter to make his anti-confession by positioning him among those who would ask about his relationship to Jesus. This dependence on another for entry characterizes Peter as one who is already outside the flock of Jesus’ followers, a status that will only emerge with greater clarity as the scene unfolds. Though Peter has followed Jesus, like Jesus’ sheep should (v. 15), he is kept outside the courtyard αὐλή (v. 15) by the door (εἰστήκει πρὸς τῇ θύρᾳ ἔξω; v. 16), terminology that like αὐλή evokes the Shepherd Discourse (cf. 10:1, 2, 7). His being outside of the

(*Johannesevangelium*, 714) adds that the constellation of Judas, Peter, betrayal, and discipleship from 13:21–38 appears here, and is a constellation that also includes the Beloved Disciple in both instances.

87 So Barrett, *St. John*, 525–26; Stibbe, *John as Storyteller*, 98–99; Lincoln, *John*, 452–53; Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 304, 307; pace Charlesworth, *The Beloved Disciple*, 338–59, who identifies this disciple as Judas. Several others have claimed that an identification of this disciple with the Beloved Disciple is too great a stretch, such as Bauckham, “Beloved Disciple,” 27; Michaels, *John*, 898. While caution is appropriate, the evidence adduced above points in the direction of identifying this anonymous figure with the Beloved Disciple.

αὐλή is ameliorated by the presence of the other disciple, though, who brings him inside the door.⁸⁸

Once inside, Peter's trial begins, as Jesus' trial unfolds nearby. The servant girl watching the courtyard door asks him, "You aren't also one of this man's disciples, are you?"⁸⁹ Peter responds simply: "I am not (οὐκ εἰμι)" (18:17).⁹⁰ This completely reverses the situation that was just witnessed in the garden. There, Jesus asked the questions, and when he knew whom they sought, he said, "I am (ἐγὼ εἰμι)" (vv. 6, 8). Whereas Jesus affirmed his identity, Peter denies it and his relationship to Jesus. Then the Evangelist notes the presence of a fire and that the policemen who had arrested Jesus warmed themselves there (v. 18). He also adds, "Peter was with them (μετ' αὐτοῦ)"—echoing the appearance of Judas in the garden (v. 5). Though Peter may be inside the αὐλή, his actions characterize him as one more associated with Judas' betrayal.

After describing Jesus' interrogation before Annas (vv. 19–24), the Evangelist returns to Peter, who makes every attempt to hide his association with his teacher. For the second time, someone asks Peter if in fact he was a disciple of Jesus, and Peter again utters the anti-confession οὐκ εἰμι (v. 25), inverting Jesus' double ἐγὼ εἰμι in the garden. The third denial recalls Peter's initial violent betrayal: "One of the slaves of the high priest, a relative of *the man whose ear Peter cut off*, said, 'Didn't I see you *in the garden* with him?' And again Peter denied it, and immediately the cock crowed" (vv. 26–27).⁹¹ Peter's promise to go with Jesus even to death is now seen as hollow, and his betrayal of Jesus

88 Notably, he gains Peter an entry after speaking to the doorkeeper (ἡ θυρωρός); cf. 10:3.

89 Barrett (*St. John*, 439) considers this μή to be on that indicates a tentative statement, not unlike the question of the Samaritan woman in 4:29.

90 Cf. Culpepper, *Anatomy*, 120: "Significantly, what Peter denies in John is not that Jesus is Lord but that he is his disciple (18:17, 25, 27)." Cf. also Krafft, "Personnen," 24–25; Droge, "Status," 311.

91 Readers of John must be on guard not to import Synoptic accounts of Peter's reaction to his triple denial (Mark 14:72, parr.). The Evangelist does not describe Peter as stricken with grief or weeping. He simply describes the rooster's crow, and proceeds with his account of Jesus' trial as it moves before Pilate. Peter may feel grief at this point, but if so, the Evangelist does not narrate it. The situation is quite similar, in fact, to the prediction itself: in 13:38 Jesus frankly warns of Peter's denial, and the Evangelist passes over any attempt to reveal Peter's inward reaction to these words. There too, readers quite rightly could infer Peter's distress, even as they could after the cry of the rooster. Nevertheless, the real moment for Peter's grief will not come until he sees Jesus again (21:17). See Lincoln, *John*, 456.

is complete.⁹² Even so, this is not utter failure, but rather ἀπορία: Peter cannot continue going the way he has. He must change his way of understanding discipleship if he intends to remain a disciple.

The scenes in John 18, perhaps more than any others, have led scholars to understand Peter as contrasted to the Beloved Disciple. The latter remains faithful to Jesus, following him even to the cross. The former not only fails to continue following, but also denies that he followed Jesus whatsoever. This denial, coupled with Peter's misdirected violence in the garden scene, causes some to believe that the Fourth Evangelist intends to diminish Peter's reputation as the ideal leader of the early Christian movement.⁹³ To an extent, such a reading rightly notes that Peter and the Beloved Disciple appear in great contrast in this scene, and that Peter has, in fact, betrayed Jesus twice over, and even provide a stark contrast with Jesus in these scenes.⁹⁴ Yet Peter will reappear again, and will emerge from this moment of shame as a disciple better equipped to guide the flock as a noble shepherd might. More importantly, in this single scene Jesus' subtle guidance of the Beloved Disciple is sharply juxtaposed with an overt, even painful instruction of Simon Peter. One path to maturity is not inherently better than another, but all that matters ultimately is the completion of the journey—a journey that even the Beloved Disciple has yet to finish.

Observing and Witnessing: John 19–20

At the Cross: John 19

The Evangelist describes a scene in which the Beloved Disciple appears as the only one of Jesus' male followers to remain with him to the end. Unheard and unseen between 18:15–16 and 19:26, this disciple again emerges at the foot of the cross alongside of Jesus' mother and the two Marys (19:25–26). By identifying him as the sole disciple close to Jesus at the very end, the Evangelist further establishes this disciple's credibility to serve as the ideal witness to the events of Jesus' life. This scene will also illustrate Jesus' subtle (yet evident) touch in preparing him to fulfill this task.

92 Michaels (*John*, 901) notes the irony here: Jesus has already ensured that his disciples will be safe from harm (18:9), and so Peter proves himself unfaithful even when his security is assured.

93 E.g., Droge, "Status"; Skinner, *John and Thomas*, 118.

94 Zumstein, *Jean* (13–21), 213.

When he first introduced him, the Evangelist characterized the Beloved Disciple not as a witness, but as someone on intimate terms with Jesus. This scene builds upon that same characterization.⁹⁵ The disciple follows Jesus to this point out of the mutual love between himself and his teacher. This same relationship leads Jesus, upon seeing this disciple, to entrust his own mother to him (19:26–27).⁹⁶ This reflects an abiding intimacy between the two, an intimacy Jesus has cultivated. This, at least as much as his physical presence in these last moments of Jesus' life, equips him to serve as the ideal witness to Jesus' identity and mission. The Beloved Disciple does not simply *become* an ideal witness; rather, Jesus has *fitted* him for that role. The way in which Jesus has equipped this disciple appears with far greater subtlety and suggestiveness than Jesus' overt and frank teaching of Peter.

Shortly after Jesus' death, the nearness of the disciple to Jesus bears fruit, as he witnesses an act of no minor significance for the Gospel's portrayal of Jesus. In 19:33–34, the narrator recounts the piercing of Jesus, done to prove his death. Importantly, after being pierced, “at once blood and water came out” (v. 34). The narrator uncharacteristically interjects at this point: “He who has seen this has testified, and his testimony is true. He knows that he speaks truly, in order that you also might believe” (v. 35).⁹⁷ The flowing of blood and water is not incidental, either, as this scene itself bears witness to both Jesus' humanity, as well as to several statements Jesus has made about him being the source of life, using both blood and water to characterize this source.⁹⁸ Both these aspects of the blood and water illustrate the theological truth of Jesus' life and

95 Beck, *The Discipleship Paradigm*, 115.

96 For an overview of several interpretive options regarding this “new family,” see Schnackenburg, *St. John*, 3.277–281. Such typology lies outside the scope of the present discussion.

97 The textual witnesses on the verb πιστεύ[σ]ητε have good evidence on either side (with $\aleph^*$, B, Ψ , and Origen all attesting the present subjunctive, while the other major witnesses attest the aorist subjunctive). The difference between the two tenses, assuming the evangelist relies upon the conventions of the subjunctive, either to the *continuing* belief of his audience or to the *start* of their belief (a problem repeated in making sense of 20:31). Irrespective of such manuscript concerns, this statement nevertheless positions the disciple in a stance not unlike Jesus relative to the unseen God (1:18), in that his testimony and the belief of the audience are interrelated.

On positively identifying this witness as the Beloved Disciple, see Bultmann, *John*, 678–79; Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (AB 29–29A; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966), 2.936; Barrett, *St. John*, 463; Smith, *John*, 364; Keener, *John*, 2.1154.

98 John 2:7, 9; 3:5; 4:10–15; 6:53–56; 7:38.

death, and none other than the disciple Jesus loved has witnessed this sacred flow, so positioned because of his intimacy with Jesus.⁹⁹

This unique testimony does not necessarily mean that the disciple's witness at the moment of beholding this event was accompanied by understanding at that hour. He does indicate his ability to perceive well, but his witness to others will only come about later as he gains understanding of what he has seen. The Evangelist reveals this in 19:35, as he notes that the Beloved Disciple will one day fulfill his role as a faithful and true witness to the events and significance of Jesus' life. The difference between the narrative present and the discourse present appears in both the Evangelist's use of the perfect tense ("*has seen . . . has witnessed*") and his comment, "He knows that he speaks truly, in order that you also may believe" (v. 35).¹⁰⁰ In referring to the faith of the Gospel's audience, the Evangelist indicates that at some point after the close of the Gospel narrative, the Beloved Disciple's witness achieved the goal Jesus had intended for it, i.e., the response of faith from those who heard. But in the narrative world of the Gospel itself, the disciple has not yet come to a place where he can offer such witness that produces belief.

As the Gospel comes to the moment of Jesus' death and burial, the Evangelist reveals the ways in which these intense moments have impacted both Peter and the disciple Jesus loved. This is especially so with respect to their development as disciples. Jesus has brought each to a place, however, where these trying events can prove formative and productive. Indeed, what takes place in John 18–19 is by no means merely the unfolding of the plot, but plays a part in Jesus' formation of both disciples. Peter has been brought to the point of doubly betraying Jesus, which made it painfully clear that Peter has misunderstood what Jesus was about, and that Peter was by no means ready to "lay down his life" (13:37). Peter, stripped of his self-confidence, has gone through such an ordeal because Jesus' guidance of him required this crucible of sorts. The Beloved Disciple, on the other hand, has endured a trial of a different sort: because of his close relationship with Jesus, he took on the responsibility of tending to Jesus' mother, and, more painfully, witnessed both the crucifixion and the proof that his teacher had died. This, too, has Jesus' handprints on it: Jesus, ever in control, chose this man to be his intimate disciple, which in turn positioned the disciple to behold such events. Yet for both Peter and the Beloved disciple, the journey of psychagogy has not yet come to a close, and

99 Barrett, *St. John*, 462–63.

100 Again, see Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 62–63.

Jesus will yet guide them to their respective goals, relying, as he has, on overt guidance for one and subtler instruction for the other.

At the Empty Tomb: John 20

The scene, discussed already in the previous chapter, opens as Mary Magdalene arrives at the tomb early on Sunday morning, only to discover Jesus' body has gone missing (20:1; cf. v. 2). "Then she ran to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved (τὸν ἄλλον μαθητὴν ὃν ἐφίλει ὁ Ἰησοῦς), and told them, 'They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and I do not know where they have laid him'" (v. 2). What happens next, the footrace between Peter and the Beloved Disciple, has produced endless variations of interpretations elevating one disciple over the other.¹⁰¹ The majority seem to favor the Beloved Disciple's perception (over against Peter's), especially in 20:8: "Then the other disciple . . . went in, saw, and believed (ἐπίστευσεν)." This verse apparently supports a notion that this disciple possessed faith based upon his accurate perception of the empty tomb, whereas Peter represents those referred to in 20:9, "for they did not yet understand the scripture that it was necessary for him to rise from the dead." In view of the progress of these two disciples, this reading of 20:8–9 would suggest that on his own, the Beloved Disciple has achieved his end, while Peter still needs the help of another.¹⁰²

This widely accepted reading of these two verses arises more from the pre-suppositions of interpreters, however, than it does the natural sense of the text.¹⁰³ That the Beloved Disciple believes is remarkable, yet this fact in no way suggests that he does not also number among the "they" of v. 9.¹⁰⁴ To be sure,

101 E.g., Brown, *John*, 2.987, 1006–1007; Bauckham, "Beloved Disciple," 33; Sandra M. Schneiders, *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel* (Rev. and exp. ed.; New York: Crossroad, 2003), 208–209; Beck, *The Discipleship Paradigm*, 116–118; Farelly, *Disciples*, 141–143.

102 Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 760; Thyen holds that the statement in 20:9 indicates the remarkable faith of the Beloved Disciple, and that this disciple believes in the full sense of the word. This, as I argue, seems to ignore the logical implications of 20:9–10, i.e., the Beloved Disciple believes, but lacks understanding.

103 This is most obvious when scholars set out to show how the Beloved Disciple is unusually perceptive, or represents the ideal of discipleship (e.g., Gunther, "Relation of the Beloved Disciple"; Skinner, *John and Thomas*, 124). While this disciple is unique, and may even perceive *something* at the empty tomb, this does not *a priori* exempt the disciple from the general "they" who lack understanding in v. 9.

104 Brown (*John*, 2.987) notes that the difficulty of interpreting these verses is apparent in the variation among the textual tradition, which tend to alleviate the tension between

the Beloved Disciple is perceptive, as 19:35 makes plain. Yet this does not mean that perceptivity in this instance accompanies his belief.¹⁰⁵ After all, as early as 2:11 the Evangelist says the disciples *en bloc* believe in Jesus and behold his glory, yet clearly they require further understanding to supplement their belief (see, e.g., 2:22; 12:16; 13:8). Given such trends in his narrative, readers should not be surprised if the Evangelist reprises this portrayal of the disciples, even “the one Jesus loved,” as possessing faith *without* understanding the scripture at the empty tomb.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, both Peter and the Beloved Disciple respond to the empty tomb in exactly the same way: “And the disciples then departed again for their homes” (20:10). Far from demonstrating a perceptive faith, both men’s response to the empty tomb implies a failure to understand fully what they had seen, else they would act as those with understanding do in this Gospel, i.e., they would witness, which is precisely what Mary Magdalene does once she sees the resurrected Jesus (v. 18).¹⁰⁷

Attempts to read against the grain of the text, to presume that “they” means only Peter and the other disciples, but *not* the Beloved Disciple, unnecessarily obscures what the Evangelist communicates here. The Beloved Disciple does believe, as 20:8 clearly indicates. Yet his belief, according to 20:9, is one that yet lacks understanding of scripture, a key witness to Jesus (cf. 5:39).¹⁰⁸ This does not denigrate this disciple any more than Peter is denigrated for his failure to understand Jesus’ destiny on the cross. The disciple simply does not have

“he believed” (v. 8) and “they did not understand” (v. 9). Cf. also Charlesworth, *The Beloved Disciple*, 95–118, who argues that the aorist ἐπίστευσεν carries an ingressive, rather than perfective sense.

105 Bennema (*Encountering*, 303) suggests that here the disciple does in fact perceive, just not *fully*; cf. also Alicia D. Myers, *Characterizing Jesus: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Fourth Gospel’s Use of Scripture in Its Presentation of Jesus* (LNTS 458; London: T & T Clark, 2012), 175.

106 So Dorothy A. Lee, “Partnership in Easter Faith : The Role of Mary Magdalene and Thomas in John 20,” *JNT* 58 (1995): 39; Conway, “Speaking through Ambiguity,” 339; O’Brien, “Written,” 296–97.

107 This is in contrast with the response of Mary in 20:18, or in the Synoptic accounts of the resurrection (Matt. 28:8; Luke 24:9–10, 34–35). Cf. Zumstein, *Jean* (13–21), 273; Zumstein identifies the tension between the Beloved Disciple’s faith and his lack of witness as arising from the use of preexisting sources, but nevertheless recognizes that as it stands now, the text conveys an important theological point that only the risen Christ can evoke paschal faith among his disciples.

108 For a discussion of the content of the disciple’s belief, see Michaels, *John*, 991–93.

knowledge that informs his belief.¹⁰⁹ No less than Peter, the Beloved Disciple has not yet reached the goal Jesus has in mind for him, in his case the goal of having a perceptive witness to Jesus' identity and mission.¹¹⁰ The knowledge and understanding that will supplement his faith is yet to come, even as it is for Peter. This final transformation of both men will take place upon their final meeting with their risen Lord.

The Commission of the Shepherd and the Witness: John 21

This final meeting takes place not on the day of the Resurrection, but some time later on the shore of Galilee. The Evangelist will one last time present the Beloved Disciple alongside of Simon Peter, and Jesus himself will conclude his guidance of these two disciples, leading each to their respective and appropriate ends before his return to the Father. In particular, Jesus gives Peter his last, rather painful lesson in being a shepherd, while he more delicately allows the Beloved Disciple to perceive him and to follow him. As he has throughout, his guidance of either will vary according to the needs of each man. This does not mean that Jesus' actions are inconsistent: both sets of interactions arise from Jesus' common concern to leave his flock with the kinds of leaders they will need once he is physically absent.

Excursus: John 21 in Relation to the Gospel

Before exploring the passage itself, however, the question about the relation of John's final chapter to the rest of the Gospel necessitates attention. While the interpretive method of the present study has typically bypassed questions of redaction and the Gospel's pre-history, the weight of chapter 21 in understanding Jesus' pedagogy demands addressing such concerns. Is this chapter a later addition tacked onto an otherwise completed Gospel, akin to Mark 16:9–20, only without manuscript evidence?¹¹¹ Or has it always been

109 As Hylen (*Imperfect*, 101) notes, *that* this disciple believes is significant, but the content of his belief is less than clear.

110 Lincoln (*John*, 490–91) affirms that the Beloved Disciple does in fact believe something about Jesus' resurrection, but notes that this belief has no impact on the narrative world whatsoever.

111 E.g., Bultmann, *John*, 700–702; Brown cites the redactor (*John*, 2.1080, with a fuller discussion on 2.1077–1082); Lincoln, *John*, 508–509. For a recent survey of positions, as well as an argument regarding the chapter as a later addition, see Armin Daniel Baum, "The Original Epilogue (John 20:30–31), the Secondary Appendix (21:1–23), and the Editorial Epilogues (21:24–25) of John's Gospel: Observations against the Background of Ancient Literary

organically connected to the rest of the narrative?¹¹² Another option is available: while a later addition, some suggest that the chapter remains somehow closely connected to the remainder of the Gospel, perhaps even coming from the Evangelist's own hand.¹¹³

Several considerations arise at this point.¹¹⁴ First, it is clear at several points (in ways more apparent than Mark's "longer ending") that this chapter has conceptual, verbal, and narrational connections that illustrate an attempt to tie in the events of ch. 21 with the preceding narrative. For example, one of the bases for including ch. 21 in this study has to do with the parallel appearance of Peter and the Beloved Disciple, which mirrors the trend I highlighted in chs. 1–20. Both men also appear quite like their characters in the rest of the Gospel. Also, the famous triple question of Jesus to Peter would seem to evoke Peter's triple denial of Jesus. At some level, then, this chapter relates to what comes before, even if someone penned the chapter after the remainder of the Gospel had been composed: *someone*, perhaps even the Evangelist, felt that this chapter

Conventions," in *Earliest Christian History: History, Literature, and Theology. Essays from the Tyndale Fellowship in Honor of Martin Hengel* (ed. Michael Bird and Jason Matson; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 227–70.

112 Cf. Paul S. Minear, "The Original Functions of John 21," *JBL* 102 (1983): 85–98; in this article, Minear argues that the primary argument for understanding John 21 as a later addition comes from viewing 20:30–31 as a conclusion to the Gospel. One of his major claims is to undercut the strength of this reading: in his view, these verses only conclude *the Thomas scene*, while John 21 serves as an appropriate ending to the narrative as a whole (88–90). It also receives the endorsement of Bauckham, "Beloved Disciple," 27–28.

113 Frans Neirynck, "John 21," *NTS* 36 (1990): 321–336; Bauckham, "Beloved Disciple," 28; Patrick E. Spencer, "Narrative Echoes in John 21: Intertextual Interpretation and Intratextual Connection," *JSNT* 75 (1999): 49–68; Carsten Claussen, "The Role of John 21: Discipleship in Retrospect and Redefinition," in *New Currents through John* (ed. Francisco Lozada Jr. and Tom Thatcher; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 55–68. A particularly interesting take on this issue is that of Jean Zumstein, and the concept of "relecture," through which a text can be "updated" at a later date to alter the shape of the narrative, without necessarily disrupting the original; Jean Zumstein, "Die Endredaktion des Johannesevangeliums (am Beispiel von Joh 21)," in *Kreative Erinnerung. Relecture und Auslegung im Johannesevangelium* (ed. Jean Zumstein; ATANT 84; Zurich: TVZ, 2004), 291–315. A recent commentary that applies this concept to this chapter is Beutler, *Johannesevangelium*, 537–538, and (of course) Zumstein, *Jean* (13–21), 298–302.

114 For a much fuller exploration of the opinions of scholars on this issue (though now somewhat dated), see Quast, *Peter and the Beloved Disciple*, 125–133.

served as an appropriate ending to the Gospel and that the Gospel remained incomplete without it.¹¹⁵

Even more compelling an argument for the chapter having an *organic* nature (i.e., always intended to be read with the rest of the Gospel) comes from P. Minear.¹¹⁶ He rightly points out that if 20:10 marks the last discrete appearances of Peter and the Beloved Disciple in the Gospel, then the character arcs of both men stands incomplete.¹¹⁷ Only in John 21 do readers see the stories of these two disciples come to their appropriate ends. For Peter, the events in this “epilogue” demonstrate the repentance and restoration necessary for his future discipleship and leadership.¹¹⁸ Were the original Gospel to end at 20:31, a reader might be satisfied that a full accounting of Jesus’ revelation as the Word of God had been given.¹¹⁹ From the standpoint of a reader with an interest in the characters of the Gospel, however, 20:31 falls flat as an ending with respect to the future of Peter in particular, though also for the disciple whom Jesus loved.¹²⁰ For these reasons, I will move forward assuming that this chapter constitutes a fitting end to the narrative, tying up several of its loose ends, and is important for understanding some major themes of the Gospel.

The Commissioning of the Shepherd and the Witness

The scene in John 21 opens with Peter deciding to go fishing in Galilee, and the other disciples go with him (21:3), including the Beloved Disciple (as

115 So Bauckham, “Beloved Disciple,” 27–28; Blaine, *Peter*, 135; Culpepper, “Peter,” 171; Charlesworth, *The Beloved Disciple*, 33; Thyen, *Johannesevangelium*, 778; Labahn, “Simon Peter,” 163. In particular, cf. Gaventa’s excellent essay: Beverly Roberts Gaventa, “The Archive of Excess: John 21 and the Problem of Narrative Closure,” in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith* (eds. R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 240–252.

116 Minear, “Original Functions.”

117 Though he thinks they do not number among the other disciples in 20:19–29; Minear, “Original Functions,” 90–92.

118 Interestingly, unlike the Synoptic accounts of Peter’s denial, the Fourth Gospel contains no account of Peter’s remorse or grief. His reinstatement in John 21 (and his pain at having been asked by Jesus three times, “Do you love me?”) helps round off his narrative arc in a way that would be otherwise rather attenuated.

119 Indeed, the reading of 20:30–31 as an appropriate ending is where much of the argument rests for seeing 21 as a later addition. But, as Bauckham notes (“Beloved Disciple,” 27), while it may be “a conclusion of sorts, . . . there is no reason to regard them as the conclusion to the Gospel.”

120 Moreover, unlike the Synoptics, there is no account of Peter’s remorse at his betrayal, which leaves his character arc somewhat unresolved.

the Evangelist indicates later). Although having seen and spoken with the resurrected Jesus, this fishing expedition indicates their ongoing failure to understand that they have already been commissioned to be Jesus' emissaries in the world (20:21). More guidance from Jesus is needed if they are to fulfill the roles for which he has prepared them.

They catch nothing until Jesus shows up, unrecognized by them (21:4–5). After guiding them to a miraculous catch, the Beloved Disciple shows himself as perceptive as ever, saying specifically to Peter: "It is the Lord!" (v. 7a). His perception here arises not from an ability to make out Jesus' face on the shore, nor from recognizing Jesus' voice. He perceives Jesus at the realization of a miraculous catch: only his master could produce such a boon with so little effort. Yet he shows not only his perceptiveness, but also how best to put such a gift to use. As soon as he perceives Jesus, he tells someone about it.¹²¹ This seems much like the behavior of an ideal witness. Indeed, that this is the first instance of direct speech on this disciple's part suggests that only now does he fulfill Jesus' aim for him. Now he has become not only an observer, but also a witness.

In partially realizing this disciple's ultimate aim, one can appreciate better Jesus' subtle hand in getting him there. No one other than the Beloved Disciple seems able to recognize the evidence of Jesus' presence so quickly (perhaps due to their close relationship). Yet up to this point in the narrative nothing beneficial, save perhaps the care for Jesus' mother, has come about from this disciple's perceptiveness and intimacy. Jesus thus sets into motion the final steps of this disciple's journey. From a distance unrecognized by all his disciples, Jesus performs a miracle, and waits. The Beloved Disciple does not disappoint, since he both rightly recognizes Jesus' work and, more importantly, immediately proclaims it to Peter.¹²² This will be only the first of many times he will make use of his perception to aid his task as ideal witness, but is nevertheless the first and only time within the narrative that he plays such a role. Jesus' formation of this disciple has, at least with respect to his role as witness, come to completion.

Peter's crossing of his own finish line, however, still requires work on Jesus' part. Once hearing that none other than Jesus stood on the shore, Peter shows

¹²¹ Lincoln, *John*, 512; O'Brien, "Written," 298–99.

¹²² In discussing this scene, Bauckham ("Beloved Disciple," 34–35) suggests that up to this point, the two appearances of these disciples together has typically portrayed the Beloved Disciple in a better light than Peter. But, he adds, only in John 21 does it become clear that the two men display different kinds of discipleship, two kinds most evident in this exchange: the Beloved Disciple witnesses, while Peter acts.

his characteristic impetuosity by putting on his outer garment and swimming for shore, while the rest of the disciples bring in the boats (vv. 7b-8).¹²³ Once on shore, they see a coal fire (ἀνθρακιδόν, v. 9), an image that appeared also in the courtyard scene, where Peter warmed himself with the guards of the high priest (18:18), already priming the reader to connect the two scenes. Jesus directs Peter to begin, even symbolically, fulfilling his role as the future shepherd, as he says, “Bring some of the fish that you just now caught” (v. 10). Peter responds by single-handedly drawing in the net full of 153 fish (v. 11). The Evangelist describes this act using the same verb he did in the garden, when Peter “drew” his sword (ἐλκύω, 18:10). Here, however, rather than undermining Jesus’ mission, Peter imitates it, by “drawing” in the many fish, symbolizing the future disciples added to Jesus’ followers.¹²⁴ By inviting him to engage in this act, Jesus has invited Peter to act out in representative fashion Peter’s future role as one who draws people to Jesus.

This invitation emerges even more clearly in what follows.¹²⁵ After sharing a meal, Jesus will, through his characteristic questioning, steer Peter to accepting not only the role of shepherd, but also the attitude appropriate for such a leader. He begins, “Simon, son of John,” which is only the second time he calls Peter by this title. The other time he did so was at their first meeting (1:42). In that encounter, Peter remained completely passive, exhibiting submission to Jesus rather than self-determination. Jesus now recalls that first meeting, not calling his disciple “Peter,” but “Simon, son of John” (21:15–17). In this way, Jesus brings Peter full circle: here his passivity is one with greater knowledge and experience, having gone through the betrayal and denial of Jesus, and now having to face his teacher once again. In so invoking this first meeting, Jesus allows him to start afresh.

Yet Jesus does not erase the past. He will use the past, particularly Peter’s triple denial of Jesus, to guide Peter the last steps of his journey. He asks

123 The verb used for Peter putting on his garments (διαζώννυμι) recalls Jesus’ own “putting on” of the towel in 13:4, 5, suggesting perhaps a connection between the roles of the two men even before Peter is fully commissioned as the successor to the Good Shepherd.

124 So, e.g., Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 367; Smith, *John*, 393.

125 Conway (*Men and Women*, 174–75) notes that “rehabilitation” is not the best word to describe this scene: “[I]f Peter is undergoing rehabilitation it can only be with regard to a reputation enjoyed somewhere other than in the Fourth Gospel, where, as we have seen, there is little evidence of an earlier good standing. Indeed, rather than rehabilitation, it may be more accurate to say that Peter’s character takes on a new dimension in chapter 21, which seems to compensate for his earlier portrayal.”

him, “Do you love me more than these?” (v. 15).¹²⁶ Raising this question of Peter’s love for Jesus enables Peter to think seriously about his relationship to Jesus. Before, his own understanding of Jesus’ mission had mattered more than Jesus’ plans to lay down his life, meaning that Peter did not have the greatest kind of love (cf. 15:13), the love that Jesus himself had for his disciples. Now, however, Jesus invites Peter to reform: “Do you love me?” In his answer, Peter acknowledges that his grand assertions about his love for Jesus have been brought to nothing. Peter answers with a humble, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you” (21:15).¹²⁷ He will only answer the question, without adding anything else to inflate his degree of commitment. Jesus’ responds with a simple command: “Feed my lambs” (v. 15). If Peter loves Jesus (as he says), then he will do what Jesus has done in taking care of the flock. Peter’s love will be measured only by his willingness to fulfill this command.

This interaction takes place three successive times, with the only changes coming in Jesus’ commands: “Feed my lambs” (v. 15), “Tend my sheep,” (v. 16), and “Feed my sheep” (v. 17). The most important addition to the exchange occurs after Jesus asks a third time, “Do you love me?” (v. 17). Jesus has now asked Peter three times about his love, mirroring the triple-denial during Jesus’ trial. The Evangelist notes, “Peter was grieved because he said to him a third time, ‘Do you love me?’ ” (v. 17). At last readers see the reaction from Peter that the other Gospels describe immediately after Peter’s denial. This grief Chrysostom views as at least part of Jesus’ aim in asking this question: “Do you see how he had become a better and wiser man, now no longer boasting and contradicting? Indeed, it was for this reason that he was greatly disturbed: ‘Lest I think I love you, though in reality I do not, just as I had many boastful thoughts before, and was overconfident, and after was overcome by temptation.’ ”¹²⁸ Yet Peter may also recognize here that Jesus intentionally evokes the denial in an attempt to

126 Culpepper’s understanding of the meaning of “more than these (πλέον τούτων)” is the least controversial, and raises the most appropriate aspect of this question: where does Peter’s loyalty lie? (“Peter,” 172–73). See also Blaine, *Peter*, 164.

127 While some have wondered if there are two kinds of love referenced by each verb, the variation does not seem to accord with the Evangelist’s overall style. For example, “the disciple Jesus loved” is described with φιλέω in 20:2, though elsewhere with ἀγαπάω. Even if the variation has significance, though, this would only illustrate Jesus’ adaptability even more! Cf. Culpepper, “Peter,” 175; Barrett, *St. John*, 486; though cf. Shepherd (“Do You Love Me?” 786), whose argument at the very least suggests an adaptable Jesus, who accommodates to Peter’s unwillingness to confess to ἀγάπη, for the moment, anyhow.

128 *Hom. Jo.* 88.1 (PG 59.479).

enact real change in the heart of his disciple.¹²⁹ He responds, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you” (v. 17). So Peter has come to embrace the humility and love necessary to serve as the shepherd of the sheep in Jesus’ stead, though Jesus has had to guide the man with sometimes sharp rebuke and even allowing him to fail utterly as a disciple.

Having given the final command to tend his flock, Jesus tells Peter most vividly how he will play his part in the divine drama, how he will live out his life in submission to God’s plans rather than his own. “When you were younger, you used to dress yourself and go wherever you wanted. But when you grow old, you will extend your hands, and someone else will clothe you and take you where you do not want to go” (v. 18). This, the Evangelist says, signified “the death by which [Peter] would die” (v. 19). Peter presumably recognizes the meaning of Jesus’ statement. If Peter were to accept the role as the shepherd, then he, like the Good Shepherd, would have to lay down his life.¹³⁰ Faced with this knowledge, Jesus gives him the final invitation: “Follow me!” (v. 19). Now is the time for Peter to make a decision, not later, and Peter accepts, now fully prepared for the role.

The final scene contrasting Peter and the Beloved Disciple only underscores their two different roles in the community of believers. Peter, in following Jesus, turns and sees the Beloved Disciple following them also.¹³¹ Peter asks Jesus, “What about him?” (v. 21), to which Jesus responds, “If I want him to remain (μένειν) until I come, what is that to you? You, follow me!” (v. 22). Peter ought not worry about what Jesus has prepared for anyone else. He should focus only on the task set before him. Although the narrator interjects to dispel the rumor that the Beloved Disciple will not die (v. 23), Jesus’ statement here indicates in part how, in contrast to Peter, the Beloved Disciple will not primarily fulfill his role by dying. Instead, Jesus here indicates that longevity will characterize the life of this disciple, a longevity that will only allow him more fully to witness to Jesus.¹³² The two men have different roles, and Jesus will allow each to fulfill his at the time proper for him.

129 So Wiarda, who observes that in this exchange Jesus “confronts Peter . . . , upsetting his equilibrium and challenging him to make decisions and take new action”; Timothy Wiarda, “John 21.1–23: Narrative Unity and Its Implications,” *JSTT* 46 (1992): 53.

130 Cf. Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 121–122.

131 This has some lexical connections to call scene of 1:35–39, including the verbs ἀκολουθέω, [ἐπι]στρέφω, μένω; cf. Bauckham, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 391–92; Bennema, *Encountering Jesus*, 301.

132 Bauckham (*Eyewitnesses*, 367–68) notes that in serving as the foundational witness for this Gospel, that he continues to fulfill his role even after his death. Beck (*The Discipleship Paradigm*, 126–127), however, takes this fact to indicate the Beloved Disciple’s superiority

Summary and Conclusion

The fulfillment of the goals for which Jesus had prepared these two disciples remains by the close of the Gospel narrative suggested rather than described, at least within the narrative itself. Yet the Evangelist communicates clearly enough that Peter will die as Jesus died: without violent resistance, on behalf of the sheep, and in a way that glorifies God (21:18–19). Peter will in fact fulfill the role as shepherd of the sheep, something affirmed by other early Christian traditions.¹³³ So too does the Beloved Disciple fulfill his role as faithful and perceptive witness, a fulfillment to which the existence of the Gospel itself would testify (21:24). The validity of this witness finds affirmation, moreover, in the fact that his witness has led to faith (19:35; cf. 20:30–31).

Yet these two men did not develop the ability to fulfill these roles on their own. The most obvious aspect of this lies within Jesus' own sense of destiny that he gives to each man in the final scene (21:18–23): they have not chosen how they will fit into Jesus' plans, but Jesus has chosen for them. Jesus' part in these men's destinies consists of far more than determining their futures, however, as Jesus has had a very active hand in shaping these men, guiding and equipping them to meet their destinies. He has played, in other words, the psychagogue.

Despite his passivity in his first appearance in the Gospel, Peter quickly emerged as the presumptive leader of the Twelve (6:69). By the scene of the footwashing in ch. 13, Peter was trying to control Jesus rather than submit to Jesus' desires. Jesus tried time and again to check him, even warning him of his impending denial in spite of Peter's overblown assertions about his commitment. Such self-confident claims only exacerbated his double-betrayal of Jesus in the garden and in the courtyard, where his misunderstanding of Jesus' mission and his errant self-determination became all too evident. Yet this fall took place within Jesus' control, and was a key step in Peter's education. In the final scenes, Peter emerged as no less active, but nevertheless willing to submit even to death for the sake of his love for Jesus. Having been molded throughout by Jesus' firm hand and rebukes, Peter exited the narrative as succeeding Jesus as the shepherd, who would one day die for his friends.

The path for Peter's companion, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," unfolded in a much different way. He may have numbered among Jesus' disciples quite

to Peter, because Peter nowhere witnesses to anyone in the Gospel, whereas the Gospel itself is the Beloved Disciple's witness. This, however, ignores the major contribution of Bauckham, that "ideal" discipleship can take more than one form.

133 So *1 Clement* 5:4, *Acts of Peter* 36–41; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 2.25.8.

early on, even as one of the two disciples who followed Jesus at the start. In his first indisputable appearance in the Gospel, he is portrayed as an intimate of Jesus, whose relationship with Jesus evoked Jesus' own with the Father. Being in such a position, this disciple was made privy to information not available to all, though he lacked some capacity to understand it, and failed to convey this information to others. In his later appearances, he was nothing if not faithful to following Jesus, witnessing things that few others could see, even the empty tomb, yet again he did not share this knowledge with anyone. His observation did not translate into testimony until after the resurrection. Only at that point, having been given an opportunity by Jesus to convey to others his special insight, does the Beloved Disciple realize his role as ideal witness. Moreover, the fulfillment of his role appears in the reading of the Gospel itself, as this disciple provides at several points vital information to the Gospel audience, with an aim toward drawing the readers to the faith in the Jesus to whom he witnesses.

Jesus has, furthermore, acted as an adaptable guide might. He utilizes several methods—offering examples, using harsh and gentle language, offering questions rather than answers, modeling appropriate behavior, and so on—in his pedagogy of these two disciples. As in his guidance of both Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman, he also responds to each man's dispositions and needs, and treats them differently to lead each to their appropriate ends. Peter required a different approach from Jesus than did the Beloved Disciple because each had a different end to achieve. Peter required some of Jesus' harshest words in the entire narrative in order to submit himself finally to God's plans. The Beloved Disciple, however, benefitted from a much more discreet, even restrained guidance. To put it another way, Jesus transformed Peter from a man of action to a man of submission, while he converted the Beloved Disciple from a passive observer to an active witness. Even so, such diverse guidance has at its core a singular aim for which the Johannine Jesus constantly works: the faith and protection of Jesus' flock, for which both disciples will, each in their own way, lay down their lives.

Conclusion: Who is the Johannine Jesus?

Since God is merciful, beloved, and disposed to do good, He does and plans everything so that we may be bright with virtue. And since He wishes us to be virtuous, He tries to persuade us to this, but does not constrain or force anyone. Also, by bestowing benefits He draws all who are willing to be drawn and attracts them to Himself.

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Homilies on John* 10¹

This study began by raising the question about the identity of the Jesus who appears in the Fourth Gospel. I noted that many studies had undertaken to explore various reactions from several characters in the Gospel in an attempt to determine which of those characters rightly perceived Jesus' identity, origins, and mission. Such character studies have made much of the various character pairs in the Fourth Gospel, and have used the contrasts established in those pairings to identify those characters whose responses to Jesus were most appropriate or adequate. Moreover, often such attempts to distinguish among the pairs is bred from a strong undercurrent arising from the Gospel's dualistic framework, wherein people either believe and perceive rightly, or fail to believe and reject Jesus due to their worldly orientation. Thus, often interpreters aim to determine, for example, whether Nicodemus aligns by the end of the narrative with Jesus' disciples or with the world.²

The bringing together of these two major ideas, character and dualism, need not yield such conclusions, however, that divide the various Johannine characters into those who live in the light and those who dwell in darkness. Rather, beginning with an overt declaration of the thoroughgoing dualism, distinguishing between "above" and "below," the realms of life and death, and so on, I argued that the Gospel predicates its notion of the incarnation on such dualism, but views the import of the incarnation in the *transcending* of that very dualism. With the descent of the Logos into the realm of human affairs, the imperceptible God is now revealed in the person of Jesus. The incarnation, then, occurs as a fundamentally pedagogical act, and inhabits many of the traits of adaptability common in antiquity.

Framing the Gospel's dualism as mitigated by the incarnation, then, opened the door for a discussion of the Gospel's minor characters. I thus explored the ways in which the Johannine Jesus takes on a posture of pedagogical

¹ *Hom. Jo.* 10.1 (PG 59.73).

² See the discussion on pp. 29–130.

adaptability not only vis-à-vis cosmic dualism, but also with respect to individuated characters. Though the scenes with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman do stand in contrast to one another, the significance of their contrast and difference comes not so much from their diverging responses to Jesus, but Jesus' very different responses to them. The Johannine Jesus accommodates these very different characters, leading one to recognize the limits of his perceptive ability, and the other he guides step-by-step to a fuller awareness of Jesus' identity and mission. While no widespread consensus will likely emerge among interpreters regarding the appropriateness of Nicodemus' response in the near future, his story nevertheless illustrates Jesus' adaptability, as does the account of the Samaritan woman.

This adaptability is furthermore on display in Jesus' other interactions with various paired figures. With Martha and Mary, I showed that their different dispositions result in Jesus guiding each in ways appropriate to those dispositions, whether in word or in deed. Neither sister receives the Evangelist's explicit approval or opprobrium as far as her response to Jesus is concerned, but both characters appear to make progress in understanding thanks to their interaction with Jesus. As to Mary Magdalene and Thomas, Jesus' variation—whether praising, rebuking, asking questions, offering signs, or speaking obscurely—enables someone like Mary to serve as a witness to the resurrection, and lead someone like Thomas to utter perhaps the most perceptive confessions of the Gospel.

The portrayals of Peter and the Beloved Disciple are somewhat more complex, but not because Jesus' adaptability was more difficult to discern. Rather, in dealing with these two disciples, Jesus concerns himself not only with their formation as believers, but also with their maturation into leaders for the community Jesus would leave behind. Thus, Jesus has to accommodate to both men in view of what that community would need, whether a leader/shepherd (Peter) or a witness (the Beloved Disciple). The analysis also had to take in a larger swath of the Gospel, as the character arcs for these two disciples spans nearly its entire length, but this provided an opportunity to see more fully the two character's transformation: Peter's from self-determined man to submissive, and the Beloved Disciple's from an observer to a *witness*, all of which unfolds through the varying, adaptable guidance of their teacher.

So, to return to the question of dualism and response: the portrayal of these characters revolves less around whether their perception of Jesus or response to him is appropriate or adequate, and has more to do with highlighting the variability of the Johannine Jesus. Again, dualism sets up the stage for the interactions of any character with Jesus, but does not dictate the outcome,

since Jesus works to override dualistic divisions. In this way, Jesus' adaptability pervades the Gospel, and these various pairs of characters serve to underscore that element of his characterization.³ These characters respond differently to Jesus primarily because Jesus responds differently to each of them, and because each character has to traverse his or her own path from perceiving things "from above" (led, of course, by Jesus). To put it another way, recognizing the adaptability of the Johannine Jesus makes clear that there is no one right way to respond to Jesus, no single path to discipleship—save the Way that is Jesus himself (14:6; cf. 10:7–9).⁴ One disciple may be more attuned to respond with a confession like Martha (11:27), whereas another may be more inclined to offer service like Mary (12:1–8). Another may lay down his or her life for the community (like Peter), while another may give up life figuratively, providing a lifetime of service (like the Beloved Disciple). In this way, the variegated kinds of responses to Jesus suggest not a pervasive dualism among Jesus' followers, but rather express the diversity of life that exists even as "they are one, as [Jesus and the Father] are one" (17:11), being also one with God through Jesus (17:21, 23). This departure from dualism comes as a result of Jesus' pedagogical adaptability.

The Evangelist's portrayal of Jesus' adaptability goes well beyond the arena of his literary character, however. It also suggests something about the moral character of Jesus, the one whom to whom the ideal audience of the Gospel would relate. As they perceive Jesus accommodating such diverse figures as Mary Magdalene, Thomas, Martha, and Nicodemus, they would begin imagining how Jesus would interact with themselves.

Peter's character provides one notable example. As noted in chapter 6, much scholarly debate paper regarding Peter's portrayal in John revolves around the question of an anti-Petrine bias in John, or argues for the Johannine Peter as a memorialization of a faithful leader in the church's memory. Yet, the character of Peter in John has less to do with the historical Peter or even "Petrine Christianity" than it does the Johannine understanding of discipleship. That is, Peter serves primarily as an example of Jesus' guidance and care, the same guidance and care by which they believed themselves to be transformed. The

3 This is not to limit their functions in the Gospel. It may be, as so many scholars have suggested, that in some way many (or most) of the characters play some representative role. My argument, rather, is that the main focus of every minor character's appearance in the story is to draw attention to Jesus' own character, identity, and mission.

4 For a helpful parallel in the Gospel of Mark, see Elizabeth Struthers Malbon, *In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000), 224.

same Jesus who appears in the pages of the Gospel, who accommodates to the various individuated characters of the narrative, is the same Jesus the Evangelist believes to be still at work among his community.

This further strikes a blow against the dualistic understandings of characters in the Fourth Gospel, as Moloney argues:

However dualistic the Fourth Gospel may be in its cosmology and ethics, the theme of 'insiders' and 'outsiders' plays no part in the narrative, however present it may be in the Synoptic tradition influenced by the Markan theology of discipleship. The reader *in the story* and the intended readers *of the story* are not 'in' or 'out.' . . . The narrative, its author tells its readers, is to help them further in a journey of faith *that still lies ahead of them*.⁵

Like the characters of the Gospel, the members of the intended audience—consisting of a variety of personalities at varying stages of understanding, to be sure—are not in competition with one another. Like the characters in the narrative, their responses to Jesus are not necessarily good or bad, though some are better than others. Rather, all are on a common journey, each being led by their Shepherd, who would employ encouragement and punishment to prod people on, with each as he or she required. Their progress in faith and understanding would develop due to the adaptable pedagogy of the one they professed as “Christ and God.”⁶

To this end, the audience would have to ask the same question with which I opened this study: who is the Johannine Jesus? While the diverse characters in the Gospel are fascinating, the Evangelist continues to turn his audience's focus back on this question. By exploring Jesus' interactions with such diverse figures as the Samaritan woman, Martha, Thomas, and the Beloved Disciple, and identifying the consistent element in those several scenes, the audience begins to form an awareness of Jesus' identity. When paired with the larger cosmo- and theological framework of the Gospel, a rather pervasive image comes to the fore, of a divine Logos who accommodates humanity both universally and particularly for the sake of salvation. This provides a very differ-

5 Francis J. Moloney, “Can Everyone Be Wrong? A Reading of John 11.1–12.8,” in *The Gospel of John: Text and Context* (BibInt 72; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 215.

6 On the pedagogy of the Evangelist in leading his audience, see Ismo Dunderberg, “Secrecy in the Gospel of John,” in *Mystery and Secrecy in the Nag Hammadi Collection and Other Ancient Literature* (ed. Christian H. Bull, Ingebord Liv Lied, and John D. Turner; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 221–43.

ent answer to the question of Jesus' identity than has been noted by modern Johannine scholarship. Whereas Bultmann averred, "The Revealer reveals only that he is the Revealer," and Meeks after him claimed, "The Revealer reveals that he is an *enigma*,"⁷ this study leads us to answer: "The Revealer reveals that he is *adaptable*."

7 R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament; with a New Introduction by Robert Morgan* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2007) 2:66; W.A. Meeks, "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism," *JBL* 91 (1972): 181.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Aelius Theon. *Progymnasmata*. In *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*. Translated by George A. Kennedy. Writings from the Greco-Roman World 10. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003.
- Aland, Kurt, and Barbara Aland, eds. *Novum Testamentum Graece*. 28th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012.
- Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Translated by H. Rackham. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- . *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*. Translation and introduction by George A. Kennedy. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- . *Rhetoric*. Translated by J. Freese. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Cicero. *On Old Age. On Friendship. On Divination*. Translated by W.A. Falconer. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923.
- . *On the Orator*. Translated by E.W. Sutton and H. Rackham. 2 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942.
- Clement of Alexandria. *Christ the Educator*. Translated by Simon P. Wood. Fathers of the Church 23. New York: Fathers of the Church, 1954.
- . *Stromata, or the Miscellanies*. In vol. 2 of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. Translated by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. 1885–1887. 10 vols. Repr. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
- . *The Exhortation to the Greeks. The Rich Man's Salvation. To the Newly Baptized*. Translated by George William Butterworth. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1919.
- Dio Chrysostom. *Orations*. Translated by J.W. Cohoon and H. Lamar Crosby. 5 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932.
- Ephrem the Syrian. *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns*. Translated by Kathleen E. McVey. Classics of Western Spirituality. Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist, 1989.
- Epictetus. *Discourses*. Translated by W.A. Oldfather. 2 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925–1928.
- Homer. Translated by A.T. Murray. Rev. ed. 4 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995–1999.
- Horace. *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966.
- Isocrates. Translated by George Norlin. 3 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928.

- John Chrysostom. *Commentary on Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist*. Translated by Thomas Aquinas Goggin. 2 vols. The Fathers of the Church v. 33, 41. New York: Fathers of the Church, 1957–1960.
- . *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistle to the Romans*. Edited by Philip Schaff. In vol. 11 of *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series 1. Edited by Philip Schaff. 1886–1889. 14 vols. Repr. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1994.
- . *In Praise of Saint Paul*. Translated by Thomas Halton. Boston: St. Paul Editions, 1963.
- . *On the Incomprehensible nature of God [= Contra Anomoeos]*. Translated by Paul W. Harkins. The Fathers of the Church 72. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1984.
- . *Six Books on the Priesthood*. Translated by Graham Neville. Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002.
- Julian. *Orations*. Translated by Wilmer C. Wright. 2 Vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1913.
- Maximus of Tyre. *The Philosophical Orations*. Translated by M.B. Trapp. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Origen. *Commentary on the Gospel according to John*. 2 vols. Fathers of the Church 80, 89. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989.
- . *Contra Celsum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- Philo of Alexandria*. Translated by F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker. 10 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929–1962.
- Philo of Alexandria: Supplements*. Translated by Ralph Marcus. 2 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953.
- Philodemus. *On Frank Criticism*. Translated by David Konstan, et al. Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations 43. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998.
- Plato*. Translated by H.N. Fowler, et al. 12 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914–2013.
- Plutarch. *Moralia*. Translated by F.C. Babbitt, et al. 16 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1927–2004.
- Quintilian. *The Orator's Education*. Translated by D.A. Russell. 5 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002.
- Rahlf's, Alfred, ed. *Septuaginta: Editio Altera*. Revised and corrected by Robert Hanhart. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006.
- Seneca. *Epistles*. Translated by Richard M. Gunmere. 3 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917–1925.
- . *Moral Essays*. Translated by John W. Basore. 3 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928–1935.
- Tertullian. *Adversus Marcionem*. Translated by Ernest Evans. 2 vols. Oxford Early Christian texts. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972.

Xenophon. *Memorabilia. Oeconomicus. Symposium. Apology*. Translated by E.C. Marchant and O.J. Todd. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1923.

Secondary Sources

- Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York: Basic Books, 1981.
- Arterbury, Andrew E. "Breaking the Betrothal Bonds: Hospitality in John 4." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 72 (2010): 63–83.
- Ashton, John. "The Johannine Son of Man: A New Proposal." *New Testament Studies* 57 (2011): 508–529.
- . *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Attridge, Harold W. "Argumentation in John 5." Pages 188–199 in *Rhetorical Argumentation in Biblical Texts: Essays from the Lund 2000 Conference*. Edited by Anders Eriksson, Thomas H. Olbricht, and Walter Übelacker. Emory Studies in Early Christianity 8. Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2002.
- . "'Don't Be Touching Me': Recent Feminist Scholarship on Mary Magdalene." Pages 137–59 in *A Feminist Companion to John, Vol. 2*. Edited by Amy-Jill Levine. *Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2003.
- . "Philo and John: Two Riffs on One Logos." *Studia Philonica* 17 (2005): 103–117.
- Barrett, C.K. "Christocentric or Theocentric? Observations on the Theological Method of St. John." Pages 1–18 in *Essays on John*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982.
- . "The Dialectical Theology of St. John." Pages 49–69 in *New Testament Essays*. London: S.P.C.K., 1972.
- . *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text*. 2nd ed. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978.
- Basset, Lytta. "La Crédibilité Du 'Moi Je Suis' Dans l'Évangile de Jean." *Études Théologiques et Religieuses* 77 (2002): 329–41.
- Bassler, Jouette M. "Mixed Signals: Nicodemus in the Fourth Gospel." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108 (1989): 635–646.
- Bauckham, Richard. *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: the Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2006.
- . "Nicodemus and the Gurion Family." *Journal of Theological Studies* 47 (1996): 1–37.
- . "The Beloved Disciple as Ideal Author." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 49 (1993): 21–44.

- Bauckham, Richard, and Carl Mosser, eds. *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008.
- Baum, Armin Daniel. "The Original Epilogue (John 20:30–31), the Secondary Appendix (21:1–23), and the Editorial Epilogues (21:24–25) of John's Gospel: Observations against the Background of Ancient Literary Conventions." Pages 227–70 in *Earliest Christian History: History, Literature, and Theology. Essays from the Tyndale Fellowship in Honor of Martin Hengel*. Edited by Michael Bird and Jason Matson. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012.
- Beck, David R. *The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the Fourth Gospel*. Biblical Interpretation Series 27. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- Beirne, Margaret M. *Women and Men in the Fourth Gospel: a Genuine Discipleship of Equals*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 242. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2003.
- Benin, Stephen D. "The 'Cunning of God' and Divine Accommodation." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 45 (1984): 179–191.
- . *The Footprints of God: Divine Accommodation in Jewish and Christian Thought*. SUNY Series in Judaica. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.
- Bennema, Cornelis. *Encountering Jesus: Character Studies in the Gospel of John*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014.
- . *The Power of Saving Wisdom: An Investigation of Spirit and Wisdom in Relation to the Soteriology of the Fourth Gospel*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament II 148. Tübingen: Mohr, 2002.
- Berchman, Robert M. "The Categories of Being in Middle Platonism: Philo, Clement, and Origen of Alexandria." Pages 98–140 in *The School of Moses: Studies in Philo and Hellenistic Religion in Memory of Horst R. Moehring*. Edited by John Peter Kinney. Brown Judaic Studies 304/Studia Philonica Monographs 1. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995.
- Bernard, J.H. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*. Edited by Alan Hugh McNeile. 2 vols. International Critical Commentary. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1928.
- Beutler, Johannes. *Das Johannesevangelium: Kommentar*. Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 2013.
- Birnbbaum, Ellen. *The Place of Judaism in Philo's Thought: Israel, Jews, and Proselytes*. Brown Judaic Studies 290/Studia Philonica Monographs 2. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996.
- . "What Does Philo Mean by 'Seeing God'? Some Methodological Considerations." *SBL Seminar Papers* 34 (1995): 535–552.
- Blaine, Bradford. *Peter in the Gospel of John: The Making of an Authentic Disciple*. Society of Biblical Literature Academia Biblica 27. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007.

- Blomberg, Craig L. "The Globalization of Biblical Interpretation: A Test Case—John 3–4." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 5 (1995): 1–15.
- Bonney, William. *Caused to Believe: The Doubting Thomas Story at the Climax of John's Christological Narrative*. Biblical Interpretation Series 62. Leiden: Brill, 2002.
- Borgen, Peder. *Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo*. Leiden: Brill, 1965.
- . "God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel." Pages 137–148 in *Religions in Antiquity: Essays in Memory of Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough*. Issues in Religion and Theology 9. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1968.
- . "Logos Was the True Light: Contributions to the Interpretation of the Prologue of John." *Novum Testamentum* 14 (1972): 115–130.
- . *Philo of Alexandria: An Exegete for His Time*. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 86. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- Botha, Eugene. "John 4:16: A Difficult Text: Speech Act Theoretically Revisited." *Scriptura* 35 (1990): 1–9.
- Boyarín, Daniel. "The Gospel of the Memra: Jewish Binitarianism and the Prologue of John." *Harvard Theological Review* 94 (2001): 243–84.
- Brant, JoAnn A. *Dialogue and Drama: Elements of Greek Tragedy in the Fourth Gospel*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2004.
- Brooke, Alan England. *The Commentary of Origen on S. John's Gospel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1896.
- Brown, Raymond E. *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*. Edited by Francis J. Moloney. Anchor Bible Reference Library. New York: Doubleday, 2003.
- . *The Community of the Beloved Disciple*. New York: Paulist, 1979.
- . *The Gospel According to John*. Anchor Bible Commentary 29–29A. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966.
- . "The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel." *New Testament Studies* 13 (1967): 113–132.
- Brown, Raymond E., Karl P. Donfried, and John Henry Paul Reumann, eds. *Peter in the New Testament; a Collaborative Assessment by Protestant and Roman Catholic Scholars*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1973.
- Bultmann, Rudolf K. *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. Translated by G.R. Beasley-Murray, R.W.N. Hoare, and J.K. Riches. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1971.
- . *Theology of the New Testament; with a New Introduction by Robert Morgan*. Translated by Kendrick Grobel. 2 Vols. Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2007.
- Burnet, Régis. "Pierre, apôtre entre Judas et le disciple bien-aimé." *Études théologiques et religieuses* 77 (2002): 105–111.
- Carmichael, Calum M. "Marriage and the Samaritan Woman." *New Testament Studies* 26 (1980): 332–346.

- Carson, Donald A. *The Gospel According to John: An Introduction and Commentary*. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991.
- Charlesworth, James H. "A Critical Comparison of the Dualism in 1QS 111, 13-14, 26 and the 'Dualism' Contained in the Fourth Gospel." *New Testament Studies* 15 (1969): 389-418.
- . *The Beloved Disciple: Whose Witness Validates the Gospel of John?* Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1995.
- . *The Good and Evil Serpent: The Symbolism and Meaning of the Serpent in the Ancient World*. Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2010.
- Chatman, Seymour B. *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1980.
- Claussen, Carsten. "The Role of John 21: Discipleship in Retrospect and Redefinition." Pages 55-68 in *New Currents through John*. Edited by Francisco Lozada Jr. and Tom Thatcher. Leiden: Brill, 2006.
- Collins, Raymond F. "From John to the Beloved Disciple: An Essay on Johannine Characters." Pages 200-211 in *Gospel Interpretation: Narrative Critical and Social-Scientific Approaches*. Edited by Jack Dean Kingsbury. Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1997.
- . "Representative Figures of the Fourth Gospel." *Downside Review* 94 (1976): 26-46, 118-132.
- Conway, Colleen M. *Men and Women in the Fourth Gospel: Gender and Johannine Characterization*. Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 167. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999.
- . "Speaking through Ambiguity: Minor Characters in the Fourth Gospel." *Biblical Interpretation* 10 (2002): 324-341.
- Cotterell, Peter. "The Nicodemus Conversation: A Fresh Appraisal." *Expository Times* 96 (1985): 237-242.
- Cox, Ronald R. *By the Same Word: Creation and Salvation in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007.
- Crotty, Robert B. "The Two Magdalene Reports on the Risen Jesus in John 20." *Pacifica* 12 (1999): 156-68.
- Culpepper, R. Alan. *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel: A Study in Literary Design*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983.
- . *John, the Son of Zebedee: The Life of A Legend*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1994.
- . "Peter as Exemplary Disciple in John 21:15-19." *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 37 (2010): 165-178.
- . "The Johannine Hypodeigma: A Reading of John 13." *Semeia* 53 (1991): 133-152.

- Culpepper, R. Alan and C. Clifton Black, ed. *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith*. Edited by R. Alan Culpepper and C. Clifton Black. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996.
- Davies, Margaret. *Rhetoric and Reference in the Fourth Gospel*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 69. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992.
- Day, Janeth Norfleete. *The Woman at the Well: Interpretation of John 4:1–42 in Retrospect and Prospect*. Biblical Interpretation Series 61. Leiden: Brill, 2002.
- De Conick, April D. “‘Blessed Are Those Who Have Not Seen’ (Jn 20:29): Johannine Dramatization of an Early Christian Discourse.” Pages 381–98 in Nag Hammadi Library after Fifty Years. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- De Jonge, Marinus. “Nicodemus and Jesus: Some Observations on Misunderstanding and Understanding in the Fourth Gospel.” Pages 29–47 in *Jesus, Stranger from Heaven and Son of God: Jesus Christ and the Christians in Johannine Perspective*. Edited and translated by John E. Steely. Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977.
- De La Potterie, Ignace. “Genèse de La Foi Pascale D’après Jn 20.” *New Testament Studies* 30 (1984): 26–49.
- Dillon, John M. *The Middle Platonists, 80 BC to AD 220*. Rev. ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996.
- Dodd, C.H. *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953.
- Domeris, William. “The Confession of Peter according to John 6:69.” *Tyndale Bulletin* 44 (1993): 155–167.
- Downing, F. Gerald. “Ontological Asymmetry in Philo and Christological Realism in Paul, Hebrews and John.” *Journal of Theological Studies* 41 (1990): 423–440.
- Droge, Arthur J. “The Status of Peter in the Fourth Gospel: a Note on John 18:10–11.” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 109 (1990): 307–311.
- Dschulnigg, Peter. *Jesus begegnen: Personen und ihre Bedeutung im Johannesevangelium*. Theologie 30. Münster: LIT, 2002.
- Duchatelez, K. “La ‘condescendance’ divine et l’histoire du salut.” *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 6 (1973): 593–621.
- Duke, Paul D. *Irony in the Fourth Gospel*. Atlanta: John Knox, 1985.
- Dunn, James D.G. *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*. 2nd ed. London: SCM, 1996.
- Estes, Douglas. *The Questions of Jesus in John: Rhetoric, Logic, and Persuasive Discourse*. Biblical Interpretation Series 115. Leiden: Brill, 2013.
- Farely, Nicolas. *The Disciples in the Fourth Gospel: A Narrative Analysis of Their Faith and Understanding*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 11 290. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010.

- Fehribach, Adeline. *The Women in the Life of the Bridegroom: A Feminist Historical-Literary Analysis of the Female Characters in the Fourth Gospel*. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998.
- Fewell, Danna Nolan, and Gary A. Phillips. "Drawn to Excess, or Reading Beyond Betrothal." *Semeia* 77 (1997): 23–58.
- Forestell, J. Terence. *The Word of the Cross: Salvation as Revelation in the Fourth Gospel*. Analecta biblica 57. Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1974.
- Fowler, David C. "Meaning of 'Touch Me Not' in John 20:17." *Evangelical Quarterly* 47 (1975): 16–25.
- Fraade, Steven. "Hearing and Seeing at Sinai: Interpretive Trajectories." Pages 247–68 in *The Significance of Sinai: Traditions about Sinai and Divine Revelation in Judaism and Christianity*. Edited by George J. Brooke, Hindy Najman, and Loren T. Stuckenbruck. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Frey, Jörg. "Licht aus den Höhlen? der 'johanneische Dualismus' und die Texte von Qumran." Pages 117–203 in *Kontexte des Johannesevangeliums: das vierte Evangelium in religions- und traditiosngeschichtlicher Perspektive*. Edited by Jörg Frey and Udo Schnelle. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 175. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004.
- . "'Ich Habe Den Herrn Gesehen' (Joh 20,18): Entstehung, Inhalt Und Vermittlung Des Osterglaubens Nach Johannes 20." Pages 267–84 in *Studien Zu Matthäus Und Johannes*. Zürich: TVZ, 2009.
- Frey, Jörg, J.G. Van der Watt, and Ruben Zimmermann, eds. *Imagery in the Gospel of John: Terms, Forms, Themes, and Theology of Johannine Figurative Language*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 200. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006.
- Frick, Peter. *Divine Providence in Philo of Alexandria*. Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum 77. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999.
- Giblin, Charles H. "Mary's Anointing for Jesus' Burial-Resurrection (John 12:1–8)." *Biblica* 73 (1992): 560–64.
- . "Suggestion, Negative Response, and Positive Action in St John's Portrayal of Jesus: (John 2:1–11; 4:46–54; 7:2–14; 11:1–44)." *New Testament Studies* 26 (1980): 197–211.
- Glad, Clarence E. "Paul and Adaptability." Pages 17–41 in *Paul in the Greco-Roman World: A Handbook*. Edited by J. Paul Sampley. New York: Trinity Press International, 2003.
- . *Paul and Philodemus: Adaptability in Epicurean and Early Christian Psychagogy*. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 81. Leiden: Brill, 1995.
- Gleason, Maud W. "Elite Male Identity in the Roman Empire." Pages 67–84 in *Life, Death, and Entertainment in the Roman Empire*. Edited by David Stone Potter and D.J. Mattingly. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1999.

- Gourges, Michel. "Le paraclet, l'esprit de vérité: Deux désignations, deux fonctions." Pages 83–108 in *Theology and Christology in the Fourth Gospel: Essays by the Members of the SNTS Johannine Writings Seminar*. Edited by G. Van Belle, J.G. van der Watt, and P. Maritz. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 184. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005.
- Gunther, John J. "The Relation of the Beloved Disciple to the Twelve." *Theologische Zeitschrift* 37 (1981): 129–148.
- Hadot, Ilsetraut. *Seneca und die griechisch-römische Tradition der Seelenleitung*. Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Philosophie 9. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969.
- Hanson, R.P.C. *Allegory and Event: A Study of the Sources and Significance of Origen's Interpretation of Scripture; Introduction by Joseph W. Trigg*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002.
- Harstine, Stan. "Un-Doubting Thomas: Recognition Scenes in the Ancient World." *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 33 (2006): 435–47.
- Hartenstein, Judith. *Charakterisierung im Dialog: Die Darstellung von Maria Magdalena, Petrus, Thomas und der Mutter Jesu im Kontext anderer frühchristlicher Traditionen*. Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus 64. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007.
- Hartin, Patrick J. "The Role of Peter in the Fourth Gospel." *Neotestamentica* 24 (1990): 49–61.
- Heine, Ronald E. *Origen: Scholarship in the Service of the Church*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Heller, Ena Giurescu. "Sibling Rivalry: Martha and Mary of Bethany." Pages 244–61 in *From the Margins 2: Women of the New Testament and Their Afterlives*. Edited by Christine E. Joynes and Christopher C. Rowland. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2009.
- Hengel, Martin. *The Johannine Question*. Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989.
- Hill, Robert C. "On Looking Again at Sunkatabasis." *Prudentia* 13 (1981): 3–11.
- Hjelm, Ingrid. "The Samaritans in Josephus' Jewish 'History'." Pages 27–39 in *Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress of the Société d'Études Samaritaines*. Paris: Geuthner, 2005.
- Hunt, Steven A., D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann, eds. *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Literary Approaches to Sixty-Seven Figures in John*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 314. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013.
- Hylen, Susan. *Imperfect Believers: Ambiguous Characters in the Gospel of John*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009.
- Johnston, George. *The Spirit-Paraclete in the Gospel of John*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 12. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970.
- Keener, Craig S. *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*. 2 vols. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003.

- Kennedy, George A. *A New History of Classical Rhetoric*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- . *New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984.
- Kim, Jean K. "A Korean Feminist Reading of John 4:1–42." *Semeia* 78 (1997): 109–119.
- Kitzberger, Ingrid R. "Mary of Bethany and Mary of Magdala—Two Female Characters in the Johannine Passion Narrative: A Feminist, Narrative-Critical Reader-Response." *New Testament Studies* 41 (1995): 564–586.
- Koester, Craig R. "Hearing, Seeing, and Believing in the Gospel of John." *Biblica* 70 (1989): 327–348.
- . *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel: Meaning, Mystery, Community*. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003.
- . *The Word of Life: A Theology of John's Gospel*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans 2008.
- Konstan, David. "Friendship, Frankness, and Flattery." Pages 7–20 in *Friendship, Flattery, and Frankness of Speech: Studies on Friendship in the New Testament World*. Edited by John T. Fitzgerald. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 82. Leiden: Brill, 1996.
- Kovacs, Judith L. "Divine Pedagogy and the Gnostic Teacher according to Clement of Alexandria." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9 (2001): 3–25.
- Krafft, Eva. "Die Personen des Johannesevangeliums." *Evangelische Theologie* 16 (1956): 18–32.
- Kurek-Chomycz, Dominika A. "The Fragrance of Her Perfume: The Significance of Sense Imagery in John's Account of the Anointing in Bethany." *Novum Testamentum* 52 (2010): 334–54.
- Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Larsen, Kasper Bro. *Recognizing the Stranger: Recognition Scenes in the Gospel of John*. Biblical Interpretation Series 93. Leiden: Brill, 2008.
- Lee, Dorothy A. *Flesh and Glory: Symbol, Gender, and Theology in the Gospel of John*. New York: Crossroad, 2002.
- . "Partnership in Easter Faith : The Role of Mary Magdalene and Thomas in John 20." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 58 (1995): 37–49.
- . *The Symbolic Narratives of the Fourth Gospel: The Interplay of Form and Meaning*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 95. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994.
- . "Turning from Death to Life : A Biblical Reflection on Mary Magdalene (John 20:1–18)." *Ecumenical Review* 50 (1998): 112–20.
- Lincoln, Andrew T. *The Gospel According to Saint John*. Black's New Testament Commentaries 4. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2005.

- . *Truth on Trial: The Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel*. Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 2000.
- Lindars, Barnabas. "Rebuking the Spirit: A New Analysis of the Lazarus Story of John 11." *New Testament Studies* 38 (1992): 89–104.
- . *The Gospel of John: Based on the Revised Standard Version*. New Century Bible. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1981.
- Maccini, Robert G. *Her Testimony Is True: Women as Witnesses according to John*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 125. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996.
- Mackie, Scott D. "Seeing God in Philo of Alexandria: the Logos, the Powers, or the Existent One?" *Studia Philonica Annual* 21 (2009): 25–47.
- Malherbe, Abraham J. "Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament." *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992.
- . *Paul and the Popular Philosophers*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989.
- . *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987.
- , ed. *Moral Exhortation: A Greco-Roman Sourcebook*. Library of Early Christianity 4. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986.
- Martyn, J. Louis. *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*. 3rd ed. New Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003.
- Maynard, Arthur H. "The Role of Peter in the Fourth Gospel." *New Testament Studies* 30 (1984): 531–548.
- McNamara, Martin. "The Logos of the Fourth Gospel and Memra of the Palestinian Targum, Ex 12:42." *Expository Times* 79 (1968): 115–117.
- McVey, Kathleen E. "St. Ephrem's Understanding of Spiritual Progress: Some Points of Comparison with Origen of Alexandria." *The Harp* 1.2–3 (1988): 117–128.
- Meeks, Wayne A. "The Man from Heaven in Johannine Sectarianism." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91 (1972): 44–72.
- Michaels, J. Ramsey. *The Gospel of John*. New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2010.
- Miller, Ed L. "The Johannine Origins of the Johannine Logos." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 112 (1993): 445–457.
- Miner, Paul S. "The Original Functions of John 21." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102 (1983): 85–98.
- Mitchell, Margaret M. "'A Variable and Many-sorted Man': John Chrysostom's Treatment of Pauline Inconsistency." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6 (1998): 93–111.
- . "Patristic Counter-Evidence to the Claim That 'The Gospels Were Written for All Christians.'" *New Testament Studies* 51 (2005): 36–79.

- . "Pauline Accommodation and 'Condescension' (συγκατάβασις): 1 Cor 9:19–23 and the History of Influence." Pages 197–214 in *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide*. Edited by Troels Engberg-Pedersen. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001.
- Moloney, Francis J. *Belief in the Word: Reading the Fourth Gospel, John 1–4*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.
- . "Can Everyone Be Wrong? A Reading of John 11.1–12.8." Pages 214–40 in *The Gospel of John: Text and Context*. Biblical Interpretation Series 72. Leiden: Brill, 2005.
- . "From Cana to Cana (John 2:1–4:54) and the Fourth Evangelist's Concept of Correct (and Incorrect) Faith." Pages 185–213 in *Studia Biblica 1978: 11, Papers on the Gospels*. Edited by E.A. Livingstone. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1980.
- . "The Faith of Martha and Mary: A Narrative Approach to John 11,17–40." *Biblica* 75 (1994): 471–93.
- . *The Gospel of John*. Sacra Pagina 4. Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998.
- . "The Johannine Son of Man Revisited." Pages 66–92 in *The Gospel of John: Text and Context*. Biblical Interpretation Series 72. Leiden: Brill, 2005.
- Moore, Stephen D. "Are There Impurities in the Living Water That the Johannine Jesus Dispenses? Deconstruction, Feminism, and the Samaritan Woman." *Biblical Interpretation* 1 (1993): 207–227.
- Moule, C.F.D. "The Individualism of the Fourth Gospel." *Novum Testamentum* 5 (1962): 171–90. Reprinted in pages 21–40 in David E. Orton, ed., *The Composition of John's Gospel: Selected Studies from Novum Testamentum*. Leiden: Brill, 1999.
- Munro, Winsome. "The Pharisee and the Samaritan in John: Polar or Parallel?" *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 57 (1995): 710–728.
- Myers, Alicia D. *Characterizing Jesus: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Fourth Gospel's Use of Scripture in Its Presentation of Jesus*. Library of New Testament Studies 458. London: T & T Clark, 2012.
- Neiryck, Frans. "John 21." *New Testament Studies* 36 (1990): 321–336.
- Neyrey, Jerome H. "Encomium versus Vituperation: Contrasting Portraits of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 126 (2007): 529–552.
- . "John 3: A Debate over Johannine Epistemology and Christology." *Novum testamentum* 23 (1981): 115–127.
- Nicholson, Godfrey C. *Death as Departure: The Johannine Descent-Ascent Schema*. Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983.
- North, Wendy E. Sproston. "Jesus' Prayer in John 11." Pages 164–80 in *The Old Testament in the New Testament: Essays in Honor of J.L. North*. Edited by Steve Moyise. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 189. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2000.

- . “‘Lord, If You Had Been Here . . .’ (John 11.21): The Absence of Jesus and Strategies of Consolation in the Fourth Gospel.” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 36 (2013): 39–52.
- . *The Lazarus Story Within the Johannine Tradition*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 212. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001.
- Novick, Tzvi. “Perspective, Paideia, and Accommodation in Philo.” *Studia Philonica Annual* 21 (2009): 49–62.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- O’Brien, Kelli S. “Written That You May Believe: John 20 and Narrative Rhetoric.” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 67 (2005): 284–302.
- O’Day, Gail R. “John.” Pages 491–866 in *The New Interpreter’s Bible, Vol. 9: Luke, John*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1995.
- . *Revelation in the Fourth Gospel: Narrative Mode and Theological Claim*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986.
- O’Keefe, John J., and Russell R. Reno. *Sanctified Vision: An Introduction to Early Christian Interpretation of the Bible*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005.
- O’Neill, John Cochrane. “Son of Man, Stone of Blood (John 1:51).” *Novum testamentum* 45 (2003): 374–381.
- Okure, Teresa. *The Johannine Approach to Mission: A Contextual Study of John 4:1–42*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 31. Tübingen: Mohr, 1988.
- Parsenios, George L. “A Sententious Silence: First Thoughts on the Fourth Gospel and the *Ardens* Style.” Pages 13–26 in *Portraits of Jesus: Studies in Christology*. Edited by Susan E. Myers. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 11 321. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012.
- . “Adaptability and the Good Shepherd (John 10:1–11; 1 Cor. 9:19–23).” *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 25 (2004): 248–253.
- . *Departure and Consolation: The Johannine Farewell Discourses in Light of Greco-Roman Literature*. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 117. Leiden: Brill, 2005.
- . *Rhetoric and Drama in the Johannine Lawsuit Motif*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 258. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010.
- . “The Jesus of History and Divine Adaptability in St. John Chrysostom’s Interpretation of John 4.” Pages 863–873 in *Jesus Research: New Methodologies and Perceptions—The Second Princeton-Prague Symposium on Jesus Research*; Princeton 2007. Edited by James Charlesworth and Petr Pokorný. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2014.
- Pazdan, Mary Margaret. “Nicodemus and the Samaritan Woman: Contrasting Models of Discipleship.” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 17 (1987): 145–148.

- Perkins, Pheme. *Peter: Apostle for the Whole Church*. Studies on Personalities of the New Testament. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1994.
- Piaget, Jean. *The Equilibration of Cognitive Structures: The Central Problem of Intellectual Development*. Translated by Terrance Brown and Kishore Julian Thampy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985.
- Pinard, Henry. "Les infiltrations païennes dans l'Ancienne Loi d'après les Pères de l'Elgise. La thèse de la condescendance." *Recherches de science religieuse* 9 (1919): 197–221.
- Popp, Thomas. "Thomas: Question Marks and Exclamation Marks." Pages 504–29 in *Character Studies in the Fourth Gospel: Literary Approaches to Sixty-Seven Figures in John*. Edited by Steven A. Hunt, D. Francois Tolmie, and Ruben Zimmermann. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 314. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013.
- Pummer, Reinhard. *The Samaritans in Flavius Josephus*. Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 129. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009.
- Quast, Kevin. *Peter and the Beloved Disciple*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 32. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1989.
- Reinhartz, Adele. *The Word in the World: The Cosmological Tale in the Fourth Gospel*. Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 45. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992.
- . "To Love the Lord: An Intertextual Reading of John 20." Pages 53–69 in *The Labour of Reading: Desire, Alienation, and Biblical Interpretation. Essays in Honor of Robert C. Culley*. Edited by Fiona C. Black, Roland Boer, and Erin Runions. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999.
- Rensberger, David K. *Johannine Faith and Liberating Community*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988.
- Reumann, John. "Οἰκονομία as 'Ethical Accommodation' in the Fathers, and its Pagan Backgrounds." Pages 370–379 in *Texte Und Untersuchungen* 78. Edited by F.L. Cross. Studia Patristica 3. Berlin: Akademie, 1961.
- Rodríguez-Ruiz, Miguel. "Significado Cristológico Y Soteriológico de Jn 11,25–27." *Estudios Bíblicos* 55 (1997): 199–222.
- Ronning, John L. *The Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2010.
- Ruschmann, Susanne. *Maria von Magdala im Johannesevangelium: Jüngerin-Zeugin-Lebensbotin*. Münster: Aschendorff, 2002.
- Runia, David T. *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey*. Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum 3. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993.
- . *Philo of Alexandria—On the Creation of the Cosmos according to Moses: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*. Philo of Alexandria Commentary 1. Leiden: Brill, 2001.

- Rylaarsdam, David M. "The Adaptability of Divine Pedagogy: Sunkatabasis in the Theology and Rhetoric of John Chrysostom." Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1999.
- Saller, Richard. "Status and Patronage." Pages 817–54 in *The High Empire, AD 70–192*. Vol. 11 of *The Cambridge Ancient History*. Edited by Alan K. Bowman, Peter Garnsey, and Dominic Rathbone. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Sandnes, Karl Olav. "Whence and Whither: A Narrative Perspective on the Birth anōthen (John 3,3–8)." *Biblica* 86 (2005): 153–173.
- Schenck, Kenneth. *A Brief Guide to Philo*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005.
- Schnackenburg, Rudolf. *The Gospel According to St. John*. Translated by Kevyn Smith. 3 vols. New York: Crossroad, 1982.
- Schneiders, Sandra M. "Death in the Community of Eternal Life: History, Theology, and Spirituality in John 11." *Interpretation* 41 (1987): 44–56.
- . *Written That You May Believe: Encountering Jesus in the Fourth Gospel*. Rev. and expanded ed. New York: Crossroad, 2003.
- Scott, Gary Alan, ed. *Does Socrates Have a Method?: Rethinking the Elenchus in Plato's Dialogues and Beyond*. University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004.
- Shepherd, David. "'Do You Love Me?' A Narrative-Critical Reappraisal of ἀγαπάω and φιλέω in John 21:15–17." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129 (2010): 777–792.
- Siebert, Folker. "Philo and the New Testament." Pages 195–204 in *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*. Edited by Adam Kamesar. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Skinner, Christopher W. *John and Thomas—Gospels in Conflict?: Johannine Characterization and the Thomas Question*. Princeton Theological Monograph Series 115. Eugene, Ore.: Pickwick, 2009.
- , ed. *Characters and Characterization in the Gospel of John*. Library of New Testament Studies. London: T&T Clark, 2013.
- Smith, D. Moody. *John*. Abingdon New Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon, 1999.
- . *John among the Gospels*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2001.
- . "The Presentation of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel." *Interpretation* 31 (1977): 367–378.
- Spencer, Patrick E. "Narrative Echoes in John 21: Intertextual Interpretation and Intratextual Connection." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 75 (1999): 49–68.
- Stanford, William Bedell. *The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero*. 2nd ed. Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1968.

- Sterling, Gregory E. "‘Day One’: Platonizing Exegetical Traditions of Genesis 1:1–5 in John and Jewish Authors." *Studia Philonica Annual* 17 (2005): 118–140.
- . "The Place of Philo of Alexandria in the Study of Christian Origins." Pages 21–52 in *Philo und das Neue Testament: Wechselseitige Wahrnehmungen. 1. Internationales Symposium zum corpus Judaeo-Hellenisticum 1.–4. Mai 2003, Eisenach/Jena*. Edited by Ronald Deines and Karl-Wilhelm Niebuhr. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004.
- Sternberg, Meir. *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*. Indiana Library Series. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.
- Stibbe, Mark W.G. "A Tomb with a View: John 11:1–44 in Narrative-Critical Perspective." *New Testament Studies* 40 (1994): 38–54.
- . *John as Storyteller: Narrative Criticism and the Fourth Gospel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- . *John's Gospel*. New Testament Readings. London: Routledge, 1994.
- . "The Elusive Christ: a New Reading of the Fourth Gospel." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 44 (1991): 19–37.
- , ed. *The Gospel of John as Literature: An Anthology of Twentieth Century Perspectives*. New Testament Tools and Studies 17. Leiden: Brill, 1993.
- Story, Cullen I.K. "The Mental Attitude of Jesus at Bethany: John 11:33,38." *New Testament Studies* 37 (1991): 51–66.
- Struthers Malbon, Elizabeth. *Mark's Jesus: Characterization as Narrative Christology*. Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2009.
- Talbert, Charles H. "Myth of a Descending-Ascending Redeemer in Mediterranean Antiquity." *New Testament Studies* 22 (1976): 418–440.
- Thatcher, Tom. "Jesus, Judas, and Peter: Character by Contrast in the Fourth Gospel." *Bibliotheca sacra* 153 (1996): 435–448.
- Thielman, Frank. "The Style of the Fourth Gospel and Ancient Literary Critical Concepts of Religious Discourse." Pages 169–183 in *Persuasive Artistry: Studies in New Testament Rhetoric in Honor of George A. Kennedy*. Edited by Duane F. Watson. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 50. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991.
- Thompson, Marianne Meye. "‘God’s Voice You Have Never Heard, God’s Form You Have Never Seen’: The Characterization of God in the Gospel of John." *Semeia* 63 (1993): 177–204.
- Thyen, Hartwig. *van Johannesevangelium*. Handbuch zum Neuen Testament 6. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005.
- Tobin, Thomas H. "Logos." Pages 348–356 in vol. 4 of *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by David Noel Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992.
- . *The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation*. Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 14. Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1983.

- . "The Prologue of John and Hellenistic Jewish Speculation." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52 (1990): 252–269.
- Tovey, Derek. *Narrative Art and Act in the Fourth Gospel*. Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 151. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997.
- Treggiari, Susan. "Social Status and Social Legislation." Pages 873–904 in *The Augustan Empire, 43 BC–AD 69*. Vol. 10 of *The Cambridge Ancient History*. Edited by Alan K. Bowman, Edward Champlin, and Andrew Lintott. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Trigg, Joseph W. "God's Marvelous Oikonomia: Reflections of Origen's Understanding of Divine and Human Pedagogy in the Address Ascribed to Gregory Thaumaturgus." *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9 (2001): 27–52.
- Trumbower, Jeffrey A. *Born from Above: The Anthropology of the Gospel of John*. Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie 29. Tübingen: Mohr, 1992.
- Van Belle, Gilbert. "Christology and Soteriology in the Fourth Gospel: The Conclusion to the Gospel of John Revisited." Pages 435–61 in *Theology and Christology in the Fourth Gospel: Essays by the Members of the SNTS Johannine Writings Seminar*. Edited by Gilbert van Belle, J.G. Van der Watt, and P.J. Maritz. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005.
- Van der Watt, Jan G. "Ethics and Ethos in the Gospel according to John." *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 97 (2006): 147–176.
- . "Knowledge of Earthly Things? The Use of ἐπιγινώσκω in John 3:12." *Neotestamentica* 43 (2009): 289–310.
- Van der Watt, Jan G., and Ruben Zimmerman, eds. *Rethinking the Ethics of John: "Implicit Ethics" in the Johannine Writings. Contexts and Norms of New Testament Ethics*, Vol. 3. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 291. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012.
- Van Tilborg, Sjeff. "Cosmological Implications of Johannine Christology." Pages 483–502 in *Theology and Christology in the Fourth Gospel: Essays by the Members of the SNTS Johannine Writings Seminar*. Edited by G. van Belle, J.G. Van der Watt, and P.J. Maritz. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium 184. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005.
- Von Wahlde, Urban C. "The Witnesses to Jesus in John 5:31–40 and Belief in the Fourth Gospel." *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 43 (1981): 385–404.
- Webster, Jane S. "Transcending Alterity: Strange Woman to Samaritan Woman." Pages 126–142 in *A Feminist Companion to John*, Vol. 1. Edited by Amy-Jill Levine and Marianne Blickenstaff. Feminist Companion to the New Testament and Early Christian Writings 4. London: Sheffield Academic, 2003.
- Westcott, B.F. *The Gospel According to St. John: The Authorized Version*. London: J. Murray, 1882; repr. 1896, 1900, 1908.

- Wiarda, Timothy. "John 21.1–23: Narrative Unity and Its Implications." *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 46 (1992): 53–71.
- Wilcox, Max. "The Prayer of Jesus in John 11:41b–42." *New Testament Studies* 24 (1977): 128–32.
- Winston, David. *Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria*. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1985.
- Yamaguchi, Satoko. *Mary and Martha: Women in the World of Jesus*. Orbis: Maryknoll, 2002.
- Zimmermann, Ruben. "The Narrative Hermeneutics of John 11: Learning with Lazarus How to Understand Death, Life, and Resurrection." Pages 75–101 in *The Resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel of John*. Edited by Craig R. Koester and Reimund Bieringer. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 222. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008.
- Zumstein, Jean. "Die Endredaktion des Johannesevangeliums (am Beispiel von Joh 21)." Pages 291–315 in *Kreative Erinnerung. Relecture und Auslegung im Johannesevangelium*. Edited by Jean Zumstein. Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments. Zurich: TVZ, 2004.
- . *L'évangile selon Saint Jean (1–12)*. Commentaire du Nouveau Testament, 1va. Geneva: Labor Et Fides, 2014.
- . *L'évangile selon Saint Jean (13–21)*. Commentaire du Nouveau Testament, 1vb. Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2007.

Index of Modern Authors

- Alter, R. 11, 107
Arterbury, A.E. 108
Ashton, J. 70, 71–72, 164
Attridge, H.W. 48, 49, 107, 116, 156, 162, 168, 171
Ausland, H.W. 105

Barrett, C.K. 65, 71, 73, 74, 76, 79–80, 82, 89, 91, 104, 112, 124, 127, 147, 162, 181, 184, 185, 187, 188, 194, 197, 198, 200, 201, 203, 209
Basset, L. 148
Bassler, J. 96, 129–30
Bauckham, R. 6, 96–97, 174, 175–76, 179–80, 188, 197, 202, 205, 206, 207, 208, 210
Baum, A.D. 205
Beck, D.R. 176, 179, 188, 200, 202, 210–11
Beirne, M.M. 94, 106, 120, 139, 141, 147, 156
Benin, S.D. 4, 14, 35, 43, 45
Bennema, C. 2, 11, 78, 87, 90, 92, 94, 97, 99, 119, 121, 139, 141, 143, 144, 154, 166, 170, 174–75, 176, 180, 197, 203, 210
Berchman, R.M. 52, 54, 55
Bernard, J.H. 74, 104, 179, 194
Beutler, J. 66, 68, 99, 102, 121, 123, 135, 153, 160, 164, 169, 179, 182, 185, 187, 196, 205
Birnbaum, E. 49, 55–56, 170
Blaine, B. 174, 185, 191, 194, 206, 209
Blomberg, C.L. 94
Bonney, W. 165, 166
Borgen, P. 45, 48, 57, 71, 72
Botha, E. 121
Boyarín, D. 48
Brant, J.A. 187
Brooke, E.A. 144
Brown, R.E. 65, 70, 71, 80–81, 84, 92, 96, 97, 104, 114, 122, 123, 142, 143, 156, 162, 169, 173, 193, 200, 202, 203, 204
Büchsel 74
Bultmann, R.K. 48, 65, 68–69, 72, 76–77, 79, 87, 89, 90, 92, 102, 108, 121, 126, 135, 139, 141, 161, 167, 169, 177, 181, 185, 200, 204, 217
Burnet, R. 194

Carmichael, C. 108
Carson, D.A. 121
Charlesworth, J.H. 70, 72, 124, 179–80, 188, 197, 203, 206
Chatman, S.B. 175, 201
Clark-Soles 158
Claussen, C. 205
Collins, R.F. 1–2, 97, 163, 164, 169, 170, 173
Conway, C.M. 2, 97, 102–103, 104, 111, 124, 141, 144, 159, 174, 182, 188, 192, 203, 208
Cotterell, P. 104
Cox, R.R. 49, 51, 52
Crotty, R.B. 163
Culpepper, R.A. 1, 83, 89, 94–95, 100, 101, 103, 120, 123, 130, 133, 139, 144, 154, 161, 166, 173, 174, 175, 179–80, 187, 188, 190, 198, 206, 209

Davies, M. 96
Day, J.N. 97
De Conick, A.D. 165, 169
de Jonge, M. 97, 104, 119
de La Potterie, I. 164, 170
Dillon, J.M. 52
Dodd, C.H. 48, 133
Domeris, W. 182
Donfried, K.P. 173
Downing, F.G. 54
Droge, A.J. 173, 194, 198, 199
Duchatelez, K. 3
Duke, P.D. 106, 116, 118
Dunderberg, I. 216
Dunn, J.D.G. 48

Eslinger, L.M. 108–109

Farely, N. 174–75, 181, 196, 202
Fehribach, A. 160
Fewell, D.N. 97
Forestell, J.T. 74, 84
Fowler, D.C. 163
Fraade, S. 170
Frey, J. 71, 162, 163, 167
Frick, P. 52, 54, 55, 62

- Gaventa, B.R. 206
 Giblin, C.H. 137, 153
 Glad, C.E. 5, 8, 13–14, 15, 18, 21, 24, 25, 31, 36,
 39, 43, 47, 48
 Gleason, M. 98
 Glicksman, A.T. 77
 Gourges, M. 91
 Gunther, J.J. 173, 202

 Hadot, I. 19
 Hanson, R.P.C. 34, 39
 Harstine, S. 167
 Hartin, P.J. 174
 Heine, R.E. 34
 Heller, E.G. 135
 Hengel, M. 173, 179
 Hill, R.C. 5
 Hirsch-Luipold, R. 71
 Hjelm, I. 99
 Hunt, S.A. 2, 11
 Hylen, S. 2, 11, 78, 100, 114–15, 135, 142, 146,
 153, 188, 204

 Johnson, M. 82
 Johnston, G. 91

 Keck, L.E. 73, 98–99, 111
 Keener, C.S. 121, 184, 200
 Kennedy, G.A. 21, 33, 82, 115
 Kim, J.K. 97
 Kitzberger, I.R. 78, 135, 138, 149, 151, 153, 154
 Koester, C.R. 78, 81, 103, 138, 169
 Konstan, D. 24
 Kovacs, J.L. 18, 41
 Krafft, E. 94, 99, 189–90, 194, 198
 Kurek-Chomycz, D.A. 151

 Labahn, M. 76, 177, 183, 184, 206
 Lakoff, G. 82
 Larsen, K.B. 77, 161, 163
 Lee, D.A. 112, 137, 139, 140, 142, 143, 146, 148,
 150, 151, 153, 156, 157, 158, 164, 169, 171,
 173, 203
 Lincoln, A.T. 87, 104, 111, 113, 121, 128, 133–34,
 142, 153, 155, 159, 160, 161, 167, 184, 187,
 188, 190, 197, 198, 204, 207
 Lindars, B. 90, 115, 121, 122, 145, 178

 Maccini, R.G. 156
 Mackie, S.D. 61, 62
 Malbon, E.S. 2–3, 11, 215
 Malherbe, A.J. 13, 20, 21, 26, 29, 47, 48
 Martyn, J.L. 97, 130
 Maynard, A.H. 173, 180, 182
 McNamara, M. 48
 McVey, K.E. 38, 94, 96, 128
 Meeks, W.A. 65, 73, 100, 102, 116, 124, 190, 217
 Michaels, J.R. 118, 121, 126, 128, 138, 140, 143,
 194, 197, 199, 203
 Miller, E.L. 48
 Miller, S. 135, 144, 153
 Minear, P.S. 205, 206
 Mitchell, M.M. 3, 5, 15, 18, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26,
 47–48
 Moloney, F.J. 65, 69–70, 71, 79, 81, 85, 89, 90,
 94, 97, 104, 112, 135, 138, 142, 144, 145, 146,
 148, 150, 153, 156, 163, 169, 190, 194, 216
 Moore, S.D. 97
 Moule, C.F.D. 168
 Munro, W. 94, 96
 Myers, A.D. 2, 115–16, 203

 Neirynck, F. 205
 Neyrey, J.H. 111
 Nicholson, G.C. 65
 North, W.E.S. 78, 134, 136, 145, 146, 149
 Novick, T. 35, 49, 62
 Nussbaum, M.C. 58

 O'Brien, K.S. 156, 157, 174, 176, 203, 207
 O'Day, G.R. 114, 116, 118, 126, 141
 O'Neill, J.C. 69
 Okure, T. 97, 121, 131

 Parsenios, G.L. 48, 80, 81, 91, 93, 95, 104, 105,
 106, 160, 169, 193
 Pazdan, M.M. 94, 97
 Perkins, P. 162, 173
 Phillips, G.A. 97
 Piaget, J. 84
 Pinard, H. 46
 Popp, T. 165, 169
 Pummer, R. 99

 Quast, K. 174, 205

- Reinhartz, A. 70, 156, 163
 Renaud, F. 105
 Rensberger, D.K. 95
 Resseguie, J.L. 176, 187
 Reumann, J. 31, 32, 173
 Rodríguez-Ruiz, M. 139
 Ronning, J.L. 48–49
 Ruschmann, S. 164
 Runia, D.T. 29, 39, 48, 52
 Rylaarsdam, D.M. 3, 4, 14, 37

 Saint-Simon, H. 45
 Saller, R. 23
 Sandnes, K.O. 103
 Schenck, K. 52, 62
 Schnackenburg, R. 89, 90, 102, 126, 127, 137, 142, 184, 191, 200
 Schneiders, S.M. 134, 202
 Scott, G.A. 105
 Shepherd, D. 194, 209
 Siegert, F. 49
 Skinner, C.W. 2, 11, 135, 165, 167, 169, 173, 180, 192, 199, 202
 Smith, D.M. 81, 85, 89, 103, 135, 137, 143, 146, 151, 167, 190, 193, 200
 Spencer, P.E. 205
 Stanford, W.B. 25, 36, 191–92
 Sterling, G.E. 48, 49
 Sternberg, M. 11
 Stibbe, M.W.G. 78, 103, 111, 120, 134, 135, 138, 144, 147, 196, 197
 Story, C.I.K. 144

 Talbert, C.H. 48, 65
 Thatcher, T. 178
 Thompson, M.M. 75
 Thyen, H. 65, 70, 71, 75, 83, 98, 100, 102, 104, 108, 116, 119, 122, 127, 140, 141, 146, 162, 169, 170, 172, 174, 177, 179, 185, 187, 194, 196–97, 202, 206
 Tobin, T.H. 48, 49, 52, 62, 75
 Tolmie, D.F. 2, 11, 174
 Tovey, D. 180
 Treggiari, S. 23
 Trigg, J.W. 32
 Trumbower, J.A. 98

 van Belle, G. 169
 Van der Watt, J.G. 76, 105, 119, 124
 van Tilborg, S. 69, 70, 72
 Von Wahlde, U.C. 69, 75
 Webster, J.S. 97, 108
 Westcott, B.F. 94
 Wiarda, T. 210
 Wilcox, M. 149
 Winston, D. 30, 49, 51, 52, 59, 63

 Yamaguchi, S. 153

 Zimmermann, R. 2, 11, 76, 141, 146
 Zumstein, J. 67, 68, 70, 71, 74, 75, 96, 102, 104, 108, 112, 119, 120, 131, 141, 146, 148, 158, 160, 161, 167, 168, 177, 184, 185, 186, 187, 189, 190, 193, 199, 203, 205

Index of Ancient Sources

HB/OT		14:19	115
		15:14	115
<i>Gen.</i>		<i>1 Sam.</i>	
11:5	61	10:10	115
11:7	61	16:13	115
16:1–16	58, 60	<i>2 Kings</i>	
16:11	60	17:24–41	121
17:4–5	178	<i>Ezra</i>	
18:9	181	4:1–4	121
24	108	<i>Ps</i>	
27	32	118	149
28:10–17	50	<i>Prov.</i>	
28:11	59	5:15–18	108
28:12	69	23:27	108
28:13	61	<i>Song</i>	
28:16	61	4:12	108
29	108	<i>Isa.</i>	
32:28–29	178	6	37
37:3	25	52:6	128
39:2–6	25	<i>Jer.</i>	
41:39–41	25	2:13	109
46:4	56	<i>Zech.</i>	
<i>Ex.</i>		14:8	109
2:15–21	108	Apocrypha	
3:14	54, 71	<i>Wis.</i>	
16:4	57	7:1–8:1	65
19:18	61	18:15	115
23:20	56	<i>Sir.</i>	
24:10	61	24	65
<i>Num.</i>		<i>Bar</i>	
21:4–9	124	3:9–4:4	65
23:19	62		
35	42		
35:9–15	60		
<i>Deut.</i>			
5:5	51		
8:5	62		
<i>Judg.</i>			
14:6	115		

NT

Matt.

9:2	121
10:25	83
16:22	184
26:5-6	159
26:6-12	151, 152
26:13	151
26:22	186
27:56	157
27:61	157
28:1	157
28:8	203
28:9	162

Mark

1:24	182
1:43	145
8:29	182
8:32	184
10:38	194
14:3-9	151
14:19	186
14:36	194
14:72	191, 198
15:40	157
15:47	157
16:1	157
16:6	159
16:9-20	204

Luke

4:23	33
4:34	182
7:36-39	151-52
7:48	121
8:2	157
10:38-42	138, 151-52
16:19-31	151
24:5-7	159
24:9-10	203
24:10	157
24:34-35	203

John

1:1-2	77, 124, 169
1:1-4	71

1:3	71
1:4-5	70
1:4-9	100
1:5	67, 70, 158
1:6	88
1:6-7	87
1:9	66, 67
1:10	126
1:10-13	101
1:12	75
1:12-13	70, 98-99, 112
1:13	103
1:14	71, 72, 75, 124
1:15	88
1:17	75
1:18	67-68, 73, 74, 75, 124, 187, 200
1:29	121-22, 163
1:29-36	88
1:35-39	210
1:35-40	178-80
1:35-42	88
1:35-51	153, 176, 196
1:36	163
1:37	177
1:38	15, 74, 160, 161, 177, 193
1:39	130-31, 160, 161, 177
1:40	160-61
1:40-41	163
1:40-42	177, 184
1:41-42	177-78
1:42	208
1:43	179
1:45	163
1:46	130-31
1:47	178
1:49	15, 85, 178
1:50	86
1:51	67, 69, 125, 159, 179
2:1-11	133, 137
2:2	176
2:7	200
2:9	200
2:11	80, 133, 142
2:12	179
2:16-22	68
2:17	86, 91
2:22	86, 91, 176, 203
2:23	102, 122

John (cont.)

2:23-25	98, 101	3:22	123
2:24-25	98, 109	3:22-36	97
2:25	88	3:25-30	88
3	97, 111, 134	3:31	67, 70, 99
3-4	85	3:31-32	73
3:1	97-99, 118, 126	3:31-36	70, 88
3:1-2	101, 104, 158	3:32	75, 124
3:1-3	101-106	3:34-35	107
3:1-8	123	3:35-36	114
3:1-13	68	3:36	74
3:1-21	70, 95, 129	4	108, 111, 126, 134
3:1-4:42	97	4:1-42	95
3:2	74, 81, 100, 102, 103, 111, 114, 118, 120, 122, 123, 125, 139, 148, 158	4:3	107
3:2-8	120	4:4-5	107
3:2-12	120	4:4-9	107-109
3:3	68, 73, 82, 102, 103, 110, 111, 132	4:5	113
3:4	110, 112, 118	4:6	100, 107
3:4-8	110-13	4:7	98-99, 108, 125
3:5	82, 99, 110-11, 113, 115	4:7-15	107
3:5-8	70, 132	4:8	108
3:6	99, 111	4:9	100, 108
3:6-8	115	4:10	109, 113, 127, 132
3:7	68, 73, 111	4:10-15	95, 113-16, 200
3:8	99, 112-13	4:11-12	114
3:9	112, 117, 119, 124	4:12	113, 115, 127
3:9-10	106	4:13-14	115, 132
3:9-12	117-120	4:14	114-15
3:10	7, 117-18, 132	4:15	116
3:10-12	146	4:16	120
3:10-21	124	4:16-19	120-23
3:11	102, 119	4:16-28	107
3:11-12	118	4:17-18	121, 125
3:12	70, 74, 119	4:19	122
3:13	48, 66, 69, 120	4:20	126, 127
3:13-15	124	4:20-22	134
3:13-21	119, 120, 123-25	4:20-26	123, 125-29
3:14-15	124	4:21-22	126
3:15-16	120	4:23	127
3:16	68, 106, 132	4:25	127, 130
3:16-17	64	4:25-26	163
3:16-18	107	4:26	127-28
3:17	66, 67	4:27	98
3:18-21	125	4:28-29	163
3:19	158	4:28-30	143
3:19-20	121-22	4:29	130, 198
3:19-21	70, 100	4:29-30	130-31
3:20	105	4:31-38	78, 82
		4:39	131
		4:39-42	6, 78

4:40	179	6:49-50	70
4:40-42	130-31	6:50	73
4:41	131	6:50-51	66
4:42	107, 131	6:51	73
4:46-54	133-34, 136, 137	6:52	180
4:47-48	136	6:53-56	200
4:48	146	6:58	66, 73
4:50	89	6:59	67
4:50-53	195	6:60	180
4:54	133	6:60-65	70
5	85	6:60-66	81, 176
5:1-17	133	6:60-69	85
5:16-18	123	6:60-72	68
5:17	85	6:62	122
5:18	85, 122	6:66	180-81
5:19-47	80, 88, 123, 146	6:67	181, 182
5:24	70	6:68	74, 158
5:25	148	6:68-69	180-83
5:26-27	79	6:69	142, 169, 177, 184, 186, 211
5:28	141	6:70	182
5:29	70	6:71	182
5:33-35	104	7:1	123
5:33-36	88	7:2-14	137
5:34	88	7:7	70
5:37	67-68, 75, 124	7:14	67
5:39	79, 104, 203	7:16	74
5:39-47	68	7:19-25	76
5:46	79	7:24	76
6	57, 183	7:28	67
6:1	123	7:37-38	84
6:1-14	133	7:38	200
6:2	81, 122	7:50-51	130
6:5-8	196	8	105
6:5-11	136	8:12	70, 84, 100, 158, 179
6:11	149	8:12-58	146
6:19	122	8:12-59	69
6:22-59	70	8:14	84, 112, 166
6:23	149	8:20	67
6:25-59	73, 78-79, 84, 85, 180	8:21	121-22, 166
6:26	146	8:23	67, 69, 70
6:26-27	79, 84	8:23-26	68
6:29	149	8:26	67
6:33	66, 73, 81	8:28	67, 74
6:35	85	8:31	179
6:38	73, 85	8:31-36	70
6:38-42	66	8:32	15, 74
6:40	122	8:34	121-22
6:41	73, 180	8:39-40	76
6:46	67-68	8:41	122

John (cont.)

8:42-44	68	11:1-44	134, 152
8:43-47	68	11:1-12:8	133-55, 150, 154, 196
8:44-47	76	11:2	150
8:51	70, 85	11:3	89, 136
8:53	74, 115	11:4	89, 136, 137, 138, 147, 149, 165
8:58	71	11:4-6	136
9:1-3	133	11:5-6	89
9:2-5	136	11:7	89
9:3	137	11:8	137, 138, 165
9:4-5	100, 137	11:9	137
9:5	137	11:9-10	70, 100, 137
9:13-34	68	11:11	137, 165
9:24	122	11:12	90, 137, 138, 165
9:34	122	11:13	137
9:35	143	11:14	90
9:38	143	11:14-15	137
9:39-40	85	11:15	89, 138, 150, 165
9:39-41	68	11:16	147, 165
9:41	121-22	11:17-27	134, 138-43
10:1	196, 197	11:20	138-39
10:1-18	76, 82, 175	11:21	86, 139, 140, 143, 148
10:1-30	136, 161	11:21-22	139, 158
10:2	197	11:21-27	78, 86
10:3	67, 161, 198	11:22	149
10:4	196	11:23	139-40
10:4-5	143	11:24	90, 140, 149
10:5	179	11:25	70, 81, 86, 140, 142
10:6	85, 196	11:25-26	141
10:7	85, 197	11:26	141, 149
10:7-9	215	11:27	6, 135, 138, 141, 142, 143, 148, 149, 154, 169, 215
10:9	67, 111	11:27-28	163
10:10	193	11:28	74, 143, 148
10:11	15, 189, 190, 194	11:28-34	134
10:14	15	11:28-37	143-47
10:15	194	11:29-31	143
10:16	67	11:31	146, 159
10:17-18	184, 185	11:32	139, 143-44
10:18	83	11:32-33	6
10:27	143, 179, 196	11:32-35	78
10:28	193	11:33	144-46, 159
10:30	79, 80	11:34-35	146
10:33	15, 122	11:35	146
10:38	15	11:36	147
11	138, 144, 149	11:38	145-46, 147
11:1	136	11:38-44	147-50
11:1-2	136	11:39	140, 142, 147, 148
11:1-4	154	11:40	86, 148
11:1-16	136-38	11:41-42	79, 149, 155

11:42	15, 147	13:14	189
11:43	149	13:14-15	83
11:44	148	13:15	154, 185, 189
11:45	150	13:16	86
11:45-57	150	13:18-30	186-89
11:45-53	195	13:18-38	186
11:46-53	147	13:19	15
11:51	195	13:21	186
12:1	150, 154	13:21-38	196-97
12:1-3	152	13:22	186
12:1-8	6, 136, 150-54, 184, 215	13:23	187
12:2	151, 152	13:23-24	186
12:3	135, 144, 152, 153	13:23-26	196
12:4	151	13:25	187
12:6	151	13:26	188
12:11	150	13:28	188
12:16	86, 91, 176, 203	13:30	158
12:17	148	13:31-38	189-92
12:21-22	196	13:33	166, 189
12:26	153, 179	13:34	83, 154, 189
12:27-30	79	13:34-35	76, 83
12:35	158	13:34-38	194
12:35-36	70, 100	13:36	166, 189-90, 91
12:36	123	13:37	177, 190, 195, 196, 201
12:44	79	13:38	190-91, 198
12:44-50	68	14:1-4	165
12:45	122	14:2-3	73
12:46	69, 100, 158, 179	14:4	165
12:47	67	14:4-5	112
13-17	91, 153	14:5	158, 165-66
13	183-92, 211	14:6	76, 79, 215
13:1	123, 154	14:7-9	76
13:1-3	184	14:8	158
13:1-11	83	14:12	83
13:1-18	184-86	14:16	90
13:2	153	14:17	90, 92, 179
13:3-11	144, 153	14:18-19	92
13:4	186	14:19	122
13:4-5	184, 208	14:20	68
13:6	158, 184	14:22	158
13:7	86, 91, 176, 184-85	14:23	68
13:8	185, 186, 206	14:26	86, 90, 91
13:9	185	15	125
13:10	185	15:1-11	68
13:12	83, 185, 186	15:4-15	179
13:13	74, 184	15:6	92
13:13-14	76	15:7	92
13:13-15	83	15:13	189, 190, 209

John (cont.)

15:13–14	92	19:15	169
15:15	67	19:25	157
15:18–19	70	19:25–26	199
15:19–21	86	19:25–27	196
15:20	86	19:26	199
15:23	70	19:26–27	174, 200
15:26	90	19:33–34	200
15:27	180	19:34	200
16:4–5	91–92	19:35	175, 187, 196, 200, 201, 203, 211
16:8–10	92	19:39	153, 158
16:12	91, 92	19:39–42	130
16:13	90	19:41	148
16:14	90–91	20	6, 9, 156–71, 202–04
17:3	68, 149	20:1	148, 158, 202
17:11	215	20:1–2	157–59
17:12	193	20:1–11	148
17:18	83	20:1–18	157, 163
17:21	215	20:2	158, 159, 160, 163, 196, 202
17:23	215	20:2–10	196
17:24	122	20:3	196
17:26	67	20:3–10	159, 163
18	192–99	20:4	196
18–19	201	20:6	122
18:1–11	193–94	20:7	148
18:4	160	20:8	187, 196, 202
18:5	198	20:8–9	166, 202
18:6	143, 198	20:9	166, 202–03
18:7	160	20:9–10	202
18:8	160, 198	20:9–19	206
18:9	199	20:10	203
18:10	177, 186, 208	20:11	146, 159
18:12–13	195	20:11–13	160
18:15	179, 195, 197	20:11–18	159–64
18:15–16	199	20:12	122, 159
18:16	197	20:13	146, 159–60
18:17	198	20:14	122, 160
18:18	198, 208	20:14–18	166
18:18–27	193, 195–99	20:14–17	160
18:19	15	20:15	146, 150, 160–61
18:19–24	198	20:16	74, 161–62
18:20	67	20:17	9, 70, 156, 162–63, 167
18:25	198	20:18	163–64, 166, 167, 203
18:26–27	198	20:19	164
18:36	194	20:19–20	164, 166–67
18:37	15, 67, 69	20:20	164, 167
19–20	199–204	20:21	164, 207
19	199–202	20:22	91
		20:22–23	164

20:24	164
20:24–29	157, 164–70
20:25	164, 166, 167
20:26–27	166–67
20:27	7, 9, 156, 167
20:28	163, 167–68, 170
20:28–29	167
20:29	167, 169–70
20:30–31	80, 81, 170, 205, 206, 211
20:31	74, 141, 200, 206
21	175–76, 204–210
21:2	196
21:3	206
21:4–5	206
21:7	187, 196, 207
21:7–8	208
21:9	208
21:10	208
21:11	208
21:15	209
21:15–17	76, 191, 208
21:15–19	118, 175
21:16	209
21:17	196, 198, 209–10
21:18	210
21:18–19	86, 175, 178, 211
21:19	174, 210
21:19–22	179
21:20	174, 187
21:20–23	180, 196
21:21	210
21:22	174, 210
21:23	210
21:24	211
<i>1 Cor</i>	
9:22	5, 26, 38
<i>1 Peter</i>	
1:3	103
<i>1 John</i>	
4:9	68
Classical Sources	

Aelius Theon
Progymnasmata 41

<i>Aesop</i>	
"The Quack Frog"	33
<i>Antisthenes</i>	
<i>Fr.</i> 51	25
<i>Aristotle</i>	
<i>NE</i>	28
<i>Rhet.</i>	21, 22, 27
<i>Cicero</i>	
<i>Amic.</i>	24, 25
<i>De Or.</i>	34
<i>Demetrius</i>	
<i>On Style</i>	33
<i>Dio Chrysostom</i>	
<i>Or.</i> 3	42
<i>Or.</i> 49	19, 27
<i>Or.</i> 71	23, 100
<i>Or.</i> 77/78	5, 16, 22, 25, 29
<i>Dionysius of Halicarnassus</i>	
<i>On Thucydides</i>	32
<i>Epictetus</i>	
<i>Diatr.</i> 3	20, 22, 27, 28, 36
<i>Homer</i>	
<i>Iliad</i>	16, 39–40
<i>Odyssey</i>	93, 108
<i>Horace</i>	
<i>Ars Poetica</i>	21
<i>Isocrates</i>	
<i>Against the Sophists</i>	33
<i>Julian</i>	
<i>Or.</i> 6	19, 27–28
<i>Lucian of Samosata</i>	
<i>Icar.</i>	23
<i>Nigrinus</i>	13

Maximus of Tyre

<i>Or.</i> 1	21, 23, 26, 31, 39
<i>Or.</i> 2	35–36, 37, 43
<i>Or.</i> 14	22, 24, 25
<i>Or.</i> 35	37
<i>Or.</i> 38	28

Musonius Rufus

<i>Fr.</i> 36	20
---------------	----

Philodemus

<i>On Frank Criticism</i>	5, 24, 29, 37–38, 39, 41, 42, 44, 138, 172
---------------------------	---

Plato

<i>Euth.</i>	105
<i>Gorg.</i>	33
<i>Laws</i>	40
<i>Meno</i>	105
<i>Phaedr.</i>	5, 19–21, 24, 32
<i>Prot.</i>	28
<i>Rep.</i>	24, 28

Plutarch

<i>Adul. amic.</i>	24, 29, 39, 40
<i>Sera</i>	20

Pseudo-Diogenes

<i>Ep.</i> 15	24
---------------	----

Quintilian

<i>Inst.</i>	31–32, 38
--------------	-----------

Seneca the Younger

<i>Ep.</i> 64	201
<i>Ep.</i> 75	19, 20, 38
<i>Ira</i>	40

Solon

<i>Elegies</i>	25
----------------	----

Theophrastus

<i>On Style</i>	82, 115
<i>Characters</i>	190

Xenophon

<i>Economics</i>	19
------------------	----

Jewish Sources**Anonymous**

<i>Pesiqta deRab Kahana</i>	35, 38, 94
-----------------------------	------------

Josephus

<i>Life</i>	107
-------------	-----

Philo of Alexandria

<i>Abr.</i>	26, 54, 60, 63
<i>Agr.</i>	53
<i>Cher.</i>	50
<i>Conf.</i>	26, 50, 59, 61, 63
<i>Cong.</i>	34
<i>Det.</i>	34, 181
<i>Deus</i>	34, 53, 62, 63
<i>Ebr.</i>	57, 63
<i>Fug.</i>	34, 42, 53, 54, 57, 58, 60
<i>Gig.</i>	51
<i>Her.</i>	50, 51, 53, 57
<i>Jos.</i>	26
<i>Leg.</i>	35, 47, 53, 54, 61, 63
<i>Migr.</i>	35, 49, 53, 57, 63
<i>Mos.</i>	35, 54
<i>Mut.</i>	35, 57
<i>Opif.</i>	53, 54, 57, 59
<i>Plant.</i>	55, 62
<i>Post.</i>	34, 42, 53, 56, 61, 64, 83
<i>Praem.</i>	55
<i>QE</i>	49, 56, 61–62
<i>QG</i>	32, 59, 60–61
<i>Rer.</i>	83
<i>Sacr.</i>	34, 63
<i>Somn.</i>	26, 35, 50, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56–57, 58, 59, 62, 63, 64
<i>Spec.</i>	52, 54
<i>Virt.</i>	63

Early Christian Sources

1 Clement	211
<i>Acts of Peter</i>	211

Clement of Alexandria

Paed. 27, 30, 33, 36–37, 40, 41,
44, 125
Prot. 4, 16, 30, 33
Strom. 34, 36

Ephrem the Syrian

Virg. 38, 94, 96, 128

Eusebius

Hist. Eccl. 211

Irenaeus of Lyons

Adv. Her. 4

John Chrysostom

Anom. 37, 38, 45, 94
Hom. Jo. 1, 34, 73, 80, 84–85, 88,
89, 92, 95, 105, 106, 110,

112, 114, 119, 120, 122, 124,
125, 128, 130, 131, 136, 140,
141, 142, 147, 148, 149–50,
152, 159, 161, 163, 178–79,
181, 182, 191, 195, 209, 213

Hom. Rom.

1, 20, 24

Laud. Paul.

45

Sac.

36

Origen of Alexandria

Comm. Jo. 39, 41, 43, 75, 79, 83,
114–15, 121, 122, 131, 156

Cels.

38, 45

Frag. on Deut.

34, 43

Tertullian

Marc.

36

Index of Subjects

- Abraham 6on48
Achilles 25, 31n77
accommodation 8, 9, 14, 16, 18, 24, 34, 37, 38,
41, 44
divine 4, 18, 29–35, 44–45, 52, 55–64, 66,
72–73
See also adaptability
adaptability 3–6, 13–46
aims 27–30
and character 18–27
See also character (moral)
definition 13–18
and expedience 31–32
in early Christian thought 3–5
Greek terms for 14–15
and knowledge 18–22
in medicine 4, 18, 20, 23–22, 26, 27, 32,
36, 40, 62, 133
in moral formation/philosophy 4–5, 13,
23, 26–30, 32, 36, 39, 41, 43–44
in Philo 47–65
See Philo of Alexandria
presuppositions for 18–30
practices of 30–44
concession 4, 34–36, 43, 59, 63, 77,
79–80, 88, 132
corporeal signs. *See* signs
mixed method 39–40, 84, 191
modeling 36–37, 63, 82–83, 94, 154,
212
progression 41–44
repetition 42–44, 85–86, 118, 173
teaching by degree 34, 42–44, 59, 64,
77, 85, 86, 110, 114, 131, 157
variation 31–32, 37–41, 101, 132, 171,
173–74, 214
and rhetoric 5, 14–15, 18, 20–21, 24n41, 31,
33, 34, 37, 39, 41, 53
in the Fourth Gospel 65–93
See also dualism; descent (κατάβασις);
ontology
Aesop 33n87
angels 50, 56, 60, 61, 69, 159–61
aporia (ἀπορία) 105–106, 110, 114n73, 117, 132,
199
Aristotle 8, 21, 22n31, 28
ascent (ἀνάβασις) 53, 56, 62, 64, 65, 67, 69,
73, 86, 116, 123–24, 162, 164
See also descent (κατάβασις)
Beloved Disciple, the 2, 158–59, 164, 166, 171,
179–80, 184, 186–212, 214–16
comparison with Peter 7, 10, 172–76
faith of 202–204
beneficence 18, 24, 30, 33n86, 57, 120, 130
See also character (moral), philanthropy
birth from above 103–106, 110–11, 118–20,
124
Bread of Life Discourse 70, 72–73, 81, 82, 85,
180–81
characterization 5, 8, 10–12, 24n42, 26, 40,
53, 56
within the Fourth Gospel 45, 68, 87, 98,
100, 104, 125, 148, 153, 158, 167, 173–75,
181, 183, 197–98, 200, 215
character (moral) 2, 5, 15, 18–27, 30
consistency of 14–16, 23–27, 36, 44, 65
humility 22–23
inconstancy of 7, 24–25, 30, 40, 204
philanthropy 22–23, 26, 38, 42, 45, 50, 52,
80, 83, 86, 120, 155, 186
See also beneficence
characters (literary) 1–4, 8–10, 85, 87
comparisons of 1–3, 6–7, 94–95, 135,
173–76
confessions of. *See* confession
traits. *See* characterization
Christ. *See* Messiah
Christology 45, 69–70, 77n111, 169
Chrysostom, Dio 5, 15, 19, 23, 27, 29, 39,
100
Chrysostom, John 3, 6, 11, 15, 36, 37, 42, 45,
46, 66, 73, 88, 95, 104, 122
Clement of Alexandria 4, 15, 18, 30, 32–33,
34, 36, 37, 38, 40, 41, 44, 46, 47–48, 125

- confession 85, 120, 122, 127, 130–31, 135,
 138–42, 148, 154, 163, 169–71, 181–83,
 197–98, 214, 216
 condescension. *See* adaptability
 darkness. *See* dualism, light and darkness
 Dead Sea Scrolls 70n87, 71n89
 descent (κατάβασις) 1, 14, 47–48
 of Jesus 1, 48, 65–67, 69, 70, 72, 73, 87,
 123–25, 213
 of Philo's Logos 47–49, 50–53, 55, 57–58,
 61–62, 64–65
 See also ascent (ἀνάβασις)
 Dio Chrysostom. *See* Chrysostom, Dio
 disciples (the Twelve) 68, 73, 78, 83, 85,
 89–90, 131, 137, 150, 153–54, 158–59, 160,
 162–68, 170, 176, 181–89
 lack of understanding 80–81, 86, 91–92,
 138, 142, 180
 dualism 213–16
 and characterization 6, 101–102
 cosmic (spatial) 69–70, 111, 214
 epistemological 54–55, 57, 71–72, 100,
 117
 light and darkness 1, 70–71, 73, 100, 125,
 129, 148, 158, 213
 ontological. *See* ontology
elenchus (ἐλεγχος) 92, 105, 117
 Ephrem the Syrian 38, 46, 94, 96, 128
 Epictetus 21, 27, 28, 36
 eternal life 59, 68, 72, 74, 78, 84, 90, 107,
 113–15, 124–25, 128, 132, 172, 181
 ethics 6, 14, 15, 25, 76–77
 faith 6, 30, 81, 84, 86, 89–91, 96, 99, 102, 120,
 129, 135, 138, 141–42, 147–49, 156–57, 164,
 171
 as goal 87–88, 101, 131, 136, 147, 150, 160,
 165, 166–69, 172–73, 211
 statements of. *See* confession
 See also knowledge; sight; signs
 Farewell Discourse 68, 91, 165–66, 189
 flattery 17, 24, 27, 29, 40
 frankness 24–25, 43–44, 90, 137, 139, 165–66,
 172, 194, 200
 friendship 14, 24, 25n50, 31, 150, 189, 211
 glory 1, 75, 80–81, 83n132, 86, 89, 136–38, 142,
 147–50, 165, 203
 Good Shepherd 1, 82, 143n41, 175, 184,
 189–90, 196, 204n124, 210
 Greco-Roman moralists 3–4, 13–14n2,
 24n42, 25, 26, 28, 36, 44
 Gregory of Nyssa 4
 heavenly redeemer motif 65–66
 Holy Spirit 86, 90–93, 111
 immutability (divine) 24, 51, 53
 incarnation 4, 5, 8, 24, 38, 44–45, 47, 67,
 72–75, 213
 Isaac 32, 60n48
 Irenaeus of Lyons 4
 irony 82, 116n82, 118n85, 120, 122, 126n120,
 131, 185n49, 190n67, 196, 199n92
 Jacob 32, 50, 56, 60n48, 61, 107, 113–15, 123
 Jerusalem 100, 126
 Jesus
 arrest and trial 143, 189–90, 192–98, 209
 crucifixion 83n132, 90, 158, 189, 197,
 199–202
 footwashing 76, 83, 86, 153, 183–186, 189,
 211
 as Good Shepherd 1, 82, 175, 184, 189,
 210
 identity of 85–86, 90, 96–97, 100,
 102–103, 111–13, 118, 122, 125–31, 133–35,
 138, 140–44, 149, 154, 159, 161–63, 169,
 184, 198, 213–17
 as Logos/Word 1, 4, 24, 30, 33, 38, 40–41,
 44–45, 48, 65–77
 methods of adaptability. *See also*
 adaptability, practices of
 ambiguity 82, 106, 118, 120
 aporia. *See aporia* (ἀπορία)
 corporeal signs. *See* signs
 elenchus. *See elenchus* (ἐλεγχος)
 imagery 82, 112, 115
 incarnation. *See* incarnation
 irony. *See* irony
 rebuke 7, 148, 157, 167, 169, 185, 187,
 191, 210, 211, 214
 resurrection. *See* resurrection

- Jewish authorities 68, 81, 85, 126n120, 193
 "Jews," the 69, 71–72n89, 85, 95, 99, 113,
 119n90, 123, 124, 126, 134, 143, 145–47
 John Chrysostom. *See* Chrysostom, John
 John the Baptist 34n92, 87–88, 91, 97, 115n81,
 163, 173n3, 178, 180
 Joseph 25–26, 113
 Judas 151, 153, 182, 187–89, 192–94,
 196–97n86, 197n87, 198
 judgment 32, 56, 76, 85, 92, 123–25, 129
 Julian 5, 19, 27
- knowledge. *See* dualism, epistemological
 Kingdom of God 102, 103n36, 106, 111, 113
- Law (Torah) 4, 124
 Lazarus 9, 79, 81, 86, 89–90, 133–55, 159, 165
See also resurrection
 light. *See* dualism, light and darkness
 Logos
 and adaptability 29–30, 47–76
 as archetypal image 63
 in creation 50–5
 as chief angel 50, 51, 61
 as guide 53, 56–59, 66–67
 as mediator 48, 51–52, 54, 56
 and Wisdom 42, 57–58, 65n71
 See also incarnation; Jesus, as Logos/Word;
 Philo of Alexandria
- Martha of Bethany 6, 9, 78, 86, 133–55, 156,
 158, 163, 169, 172, 214
 Mary Magdalene 6, 9, 156–64, 166, 167–68,
 171, 202, 203, 215
 Mary of Bethany 6, 9, 78, 133–55, 156, 172,
 184, 196n86, 214, 215
 Maximus of Tyre 22, 23, 35, 37, 39, 43
 Messiah 6, 127, 128, 131, 161, 163, 177
 miracles. *See* signs
 misunderstanding 6, 84n139, 89, 102n32,
 109–116, 121, 122–23, 128, 137, 140, 146,
 157, 163, 166, 183–86, 194, 201, 211
 Moses 38, 57, 61–62, 79, 124–25
- Nathanael 69, 85–86, 125n115, 131, 159n16,
 178, 179
- Nicodemus 6, 7, 9, 70, 78, 81, 85, 94–132, 134,
 138, 139, 148, 153, 155, 156, 158, 172, 195,
 212–15
- Odysseus 23, 25–26, 28n63, 31n77, 100,
 191–92n72
- ontology 6, 51–52, 53–55, 67–68
 being and becoming 53–54, 71n88, 72
- Origen of Alexandria 4, 11, 15, 34, 38, 42–43,
 45, 46, 47–48, 75, 144, 156
- Paraclete. *See* Holy Spirit
parrhesia. *See* frankness
- Paul 13–14n2, 14n4, 18n13, 20n23, 24–25n44,
 25n45, 26, 36, 38
- pedagogy
 See adaptability; psychagogy
- perception 6, 9, 37, 42–43, 59, 61–62, 64,
 67–68, 74–77, 79n105, 101–104, 109–16,
 121–22, 132, 170, 214–15
 See also sight
- Persuasion 16, 20, 21, 23, 26–27, 32–33, 35, 41,
 45, 51, 53, 55, 58–59, 65, 81, 100, 213
 See also adaptability, methods of
- Peter 158–59, 164, 166, 171, 172–212
 comparison with Beloved Disciple 7, 10,
 172–76, 214–16
 denial of Jesus 195–99
 restoration 204–211
 as shepherd 175–76, 189–90, 193–94, 199,
 206, 208, 210, 211–12
- Philo of Alexandria 9, 25–26, 29–30, 32, 35,
 42, 46, 47–65, 66–72, 75, 77, 87, 93, 133
 interpretive method 60, 64
 Logos theology. *See* Logos
 in Middle Platonism 51–52, 54n20
 Powers (*dunameis*) 60–61
 seeing God (*visio Dei*) 29–30, 55–56, 64
 terminology for adaptability 52–53
- Philodemus 5, 29, 37–38, 39–40, 41, 172
- Plato 5, 8, 19, 20, 28, 54, 105
- Plutarch 24, 29, 39, 40
- prophet, prophecy 38, 122–23, 125, 127n122,
 128, 191
- psychagogy (definition) 13–18
 See also adaptability

Quintilian 31

recognition 125–29, 161–63, 168–69

resurrection 86, 90, 140–42, 148

of Jesus 6–7, 9, 86, 91, 150, 155, 156–71,
188, 195, 203, 204, 207, 212

physicality of 7, 162–63, 164, 166–68

of Lazarus 81, 147–50, 152, 165

See also Lazarus

revelation 75, 81, 95, 117, 121–25, 127–29, 140,
143, 161, 178, 195, 206

relation to salvation 59, 74, 76, 90,
106n48, 111, 119–20, 123–25

See also salvation

Samaria, Samaritans 6, 78, 99, 100–101, 107,
108, 113–14, 126–27, 131

Samaritan woman, the 6, 9, 78, 85, 94–132,
134, 138, 143, 155, 156, 163, 173, 212, 214,
216

salvation 4–5, 9–10, 16, 29–30, 40–41, 44–45,
50, 55, 80, 113, 126, 129, 216

self-teaching 34, 43, 82

sight 103, 109, 161, 168, 169–70,

See also perception

signs 16, 76n106, 89, 102, 139

and adaptability 16, 37, 59, 77, 80–83, 214

and faith 81, 91n162, 104, 130, 166, 169–70

Simon Peter. *See* Peter

sin 121, 125, 152

Socrates 5, 19–20, 23, 28, 105–106

Son of Man 65, 69, 69–70n84, 124, 143

soteriology. *See* salvation

Spirit. *See* Holy Spirit

Sychar 107

synkatabasis. *See* adaptability

Synoptic parallels to John 76, 87, 121, 133,
151–52, 157, 159, 162, 182, 184, 186, 216

Taheb 127n122

Thomas 164–171

transcendence (divine) 53–54, 67, 72, 73

truth 3, 9, 15, 33, 36–37, 43, 50, 55, 67–68,
73–75, 80–82, 96, 104–106, 111, 115–16,
120–21, 124–29, 131–32, 135, 143, 149,
169–70, 180, 189–90, 200

“Spirit of Truth.” *See* Holy Spirit

vice 19–21, 27, 29, 32, 43, 53, 54

virtue 8, 15, 19–21, 24, 26, 27–29, 32–33,
36–45, 49–50, 52–66, 83, 155, 213

vision. *See* perception; sight

water 95, 107–109, 111–16, 120–21, 126, 128,
200

wind. *See* Holy Spirit

worship 43, 123–24, 126–29, 143–44, 175

